

PAMPHLETS

by

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THE CREATION.

GENESIS i. ii.

THERE are truths which concern external nature, for which we are indebted to the revelation of God. Creation is one of these. That we are warranted in treating this truth as one which man could only guess after, without a divine revelation, we cannot but infer from the fact that mankind in general doubted about it—nay, even those who had the reputation of being the wisest and greatest of men denying it. There was no country where philosophy had such brilliant names and such extensive cultivation as in Greece; yet perhaps nowhere else was unbelief of creation more prevalent, especially among the philosophers. Aristotle denied it; Plato never understood it. To say who did comprehend, or even so much as conceive it, would be difficult. I deny not that there were those who spoke of it, but with singular darkness, and with evident confusion of mind. And yet it is a truth which, when once it is revealed, man's mind feels that so it must have been, if he really weighs the facts, and submits to their force.

The reason why man, without a revelation, cannot reach up to the creation as a certainty, I suppose to be this,—that man, as such—apart from a higher being—

cannot rise above that which he is himself. He is but a creature. He may reason as to the effects of creation around him; he may arrive at inferences and convictions—and so he has, as the apostle Paul shows us—of God's eternal power and Godhead. At the same time, as creation is clearly out of the sphere of sense and demonstration, so there can be no certainty of it unless God reveal it. When revealed, it at once accounts for and explains that which is before the eyes of all.

Men have raised many difficulties about creation. There is nothing so easy, even for a child, as to put questions hard to solve; but, after all, the difficulties and objections of speculation are generally trifling, when looked into with candour, and fairly confronted with the light of divine truth.

Thus men have asked why creation should be at a certain point of time, why not always. I answer that to say *always* is to deny creation. You assume by your doubt the denial of that which God's word asserts, and which even your reason can find the only key that really unlocks the universe. More than this, creation necessarily implies an exertion of the power of God; for it means that God was pleased to put forth His energy, and to give being to that which had no previous existence. And clearly it belongs to a personal being, as God is, to have a will—consequently, to create when He pleases, how He pleases, and as much or as little as He pleases.

Creation, therefore, is the action of sovereign will to call into being whatever seemed fit to His wisdom. If one used "time" of this, it must be in a large sense; for, strictly speaking, what we call time ordinarily is

duration measured by created objects, after they have been caused to exist by God's power. In ancient times the philosophizing Jews found considerable difficulty in bringing in measures of time into their thoughts of creation. Their difficulty was precisely the opposite of that which Gentile philosophers feel now. The modern schools of science demand enormous tracts of time; but they themselves must admit they have made profound mistakes—their own books prove it. They differ not only from their predecessors, but from one another; not only from one another, but from themselves. Give them only a few years, and we find the most confident statements made—by geologists more particularly—refuted, not merely by other writers, but by their own subsequent investigations.

Again, in general it is not a question of disputing their observations, or well-attested facts. These may be interesting and important, as well as solid; the use made of them is another thing. We are entitled to judge their conclusions: they assuredly have done so themselves, with no little freedom; we are entitled on incomparably better grounds, if we have confidence in the word of God, which they have not. Only let us take care, lest we bring, by our own haste or unskillfulness, unmerited blame on that word which we seek to expound. If they have let it slip, if they have dared to despise it, so much the worse for them both now and evermore.

The truth is that scripture is infinitely larger than the systems of men. I shall hope to prove, this afternoon, two things:—that after the beginning there is room for the longest successive lapses of duration;

next, that the ordinary divisions of time are expressly introduced, and this precisely when it suits the character of God's revelation, and His dealings with men. Consequently the word of God leaves ample space for all that is true in the systems both of the ancients and of the moderns. Here, then, as ordinarily, and I dare to say always, it is only ignorance of scripture, and inattention to it, which have created the difficulty, as they are apt to do.

In short, the portion that has been read gives two great facts: creation at first, apart from those measures of time which belong to the present condition of the heavens and earth; secondly, the introduction of the common course of time, when God is undertaking to prepare an immediate abode for man on the earth. Thus, then, is met the Alexandrian theory, as of Philo, who thought it derogatory to God to suppose literal time in creation.* His conception of the divine energy was an instantaneous result. The moderns have reduced God to a being rather more like themselves. For man undoubtedly would be a long time making such a world as this, and so is ready to imagine that God must have been a long time too. I do not say that there is much to boast of, either in ancients or in moderns; but the fact is that there seems to be a true element in both these suppositions. The mischief is that neither has been rightly understood, and that one has been set

* Philo, in his treatise on the Mosaic account of creation, does not go farther than saying that the six days were said for the sake of arrangement, to which number is allied, of which he curiously thinks "six" is perfection. But in his first book of Allegories, he will have it that Moses wrote Gen. ii. 4 to leave the time undefined, and so to exclude the idea that the universe came into being in six days.

against another ; whereas both, duly applied, have a solid existence in fact, and in the revelation of God's word. But we must distinguish and not confound them.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." If God had been bound to create at any moment before that in which He was pleased to call into being the heavens and the earth, His character must have been denied ; He would not thus be the Absolute after all. For absolute means that He is not tied to conditions. That He was pleased, therefore, to exert His own divine energy at the particular time when He chose flows from the very fact that He is God. Even a man has a will. Is God to be deprived of His will ? What sort of a God would that be ?

"In the beginning," then, "God created the heaven and the earth." Observe the careful abstinence here from measures of time that belong to man. It is now well known, that not the heavens only but the earth had an existence and suited condition when man was not upon it,—when it might be utterly impossible, according to the facts that we know about its circumstances, for man to be there, or for any animated nature to subsist,—followed by vast but gradual changes, as well as sudden convulsions destructive of such living things as did afterwards exist. For such crises and changes there were, if there be anything ascertained in the "uncertain science," as one called it who was himself one of the chief contributors to the riches of physical knowledge. And an uncertain science it truly is. Humboldt, we may be sure, did not mean to slight any real fruit of man's mind. If there be, then, anything certain in

the uncertain science of geology, it is this, that there were immense tracts of duration when man did not exist upon the earth. God's word leaves ample space for them. "In the beginning" fixes the commencement of the universe indeed, but admits of eras of indefinite extent, and this before the confusion described in the following verse, still more of course before the six days, whose course begins with verse 3.

To what use He applied them—what were the particular constitution, phase, and denizens of the earth during one space or another, God has not seen fit to lay before us in His word. This is no defect in scripture: that it lies open to such a charge flows from one of its excellencies. The word of God was never meant to be a book of human science. Nevertheless, when science ceases to be uncertain, when it is no longer a heap of hypotheses, one displacing and destroying another, in the measure in which it becomes really entitled to the rank of science, and attains any degree of consistency as a branch of knowledge, it never fails to pay homage to the word of God. I do not speak of every individual who cultivates it. Far from that. But it seems to me true of science itself. And unquestionably men who have largely advanced its domains in all directions have not been the least loud in their acknowledgment of God's word, when it speaks of that which they are generally considered to know best. There are none in this room who would dispute the place of a Newton or a Cuvier. They were not backward in owning the value of scriptural truths. Remember, I do not bring in the names of these great men as if it could be any triumph for the cause of God. It was their gain to bow to

His word, which really cast lustre on them, not they on it.

So always it is. There is no man but what derives all his blessing, if he be wise, through God's word from God Himself. Sir Isaac Newton, for instance, did not degrade the science of which he was one of the most illustrious ornaments by denying God or dishonouring His word. Not that the prince of natural philosophers understood the word of God well—I do not think he did. It was not given to him to sound the depths of scripture to any remarkable extent. He can scarcely be deemed correct as to his views of creation; for his idea was that God in the first place created crude masses of matter.* Very likely such is the notion among many to this day; if so, it is a serious error, which derives no countenance from the word of God. What scripture says is that in the beginning God created "the heaven

* "It seems probable to me that God, in the beginning, formed matter in solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, moveable particles, of such sizes and figures, and with such other properties, and in such proportions to space, as most conduced to the end for which He formed them.

"By the help of this principle all material things seem to have been composed of the hard and solid particles above mentioned, variously associated in the first creation by the counsel of an intelligent Agent; for it became Him who created them to set them in order. And if He did so, it is unphilosophical to seek for any other origin of the world, or to pretend that it might have arisen out of chaos by the mere laws of nature; though being once formed it may continue by these laws for many ages.

"Space being infinitely divisible, and matter not being necessary in all places, it may be also allowed that God is able to create particles of matter of several sizes and figures, and in several proportions to space, and perhaps of different densities and forces, and thereby to vary the laws of nature, and make worlds of several sorts in several parts of the universe. At least I see nothing of contradiction in all this."—*Horsley's Newton*, vol. iv. pp. 260, &c.

and the earth." Do these latter terms mean masses of matter? Heaven is not masses of matter, nor earth either. When scripture says God created the heaven and the earth, it means what it says. God did *not* create a mass of undigested materials. We may presume Sir Isaac got this from Ovid, certainly not from the Bible. Most school-boys have imbibed the same idea; for even the greatest of men may sometimes be affected by that which influences the child at school. Few of us sift our sources of thought enough to discern how much we are tinctured, especially by heathen poets and philosophers. There is no man necessarily above such an influence. It would be only flattering ourselves to fancy that any man here could pretend to such an immunity. I should be sorry, indeed, to give the slightest ground to suppose it to be a question of man against man. My present task is to vindicate God's word, no matter who the person is that ventures to oppose it. Let his reputation be what it may, God is above him, and His word is infinitely wiser than that which any man has written without inspiration. Scripture never knows what it is to correct itself; it corrects all others and their words, let them be the greatest philosophers or who they may.

God's word then asserts, that in the beginning He created the heaven and the earth. I admit that it was not the heavens in the sense in which we afterwards read of them, in the course of the second day (verses 6-8). It was not the earth in the state in which, when the waters were finally gathered into seas, man was to live on the dry land. Nor is there any reference to man or even to any other animal in this primary men-

tion of the earth (verse 1). All is left strikingly open. If science has made discoveries here, let her humbly seek to prove them. Let her remember the cosmogonies of olden time and not be too hasty. Above all, let her not be in a hurry to contradict the Bible. She will be wiser if she curbs her spirit and seeks a docile mind; otherwise she will find out her humiliating mistake before long. When things get settled down into their places, and the various discoveries acquire shape, and are generalized into laws that carry conviction everywhere, like the principle of gravitation; when geology arrives (if ever it should) at such a place as its far more exact sister, astronomy, I do not doubt that her obedience to the Bible will be more complete than it is now. Not that I expect such progress; yet it is not for any one to predict what may be in reserve. But this is certain, that scripture asserts the grand truth that God gave being to the heaven and the earth, without connecting this with time as measured by man, still less of course by history.

Consequently the common idea of putting the creation of the world some six thousand years ago is a mere blunder. The Bible is in no way responsible for it. Where does scripture say so, or anything approaching to it? It is only the annotator at the beginning of the Authorised Version who joins B.C. 4004 with Genesis i. 1. I do not doubt that the margin was thus supplied by men, excellent, learned, and with pious intentions. But it is only man, not God, who dates creation from Tisri or September 1st. And this is the blessedness of the Bible, that we have in itself that which corrects the best of men who laboured on it with

the best means and desires.* Is this a loss? To my mind an immense boon, especially to those who boast of no wisdom except that which the Bible gives them. The Bible—and this is its boast and ours—is the book for all, be they the simplest or the most ignorant. The Bible—and where is there the appearance of such another book,—can correct the best wisdom that man has ever laid up, not merely outside, but from the Bible itself. The Bible, then, nowhere puts creation in connection with Adam,—expressly not; nor is it in connection with animated being, with beasts, or birds, or fishes, or reptiles, nor even with the grass and fruits of the earth. It simply affirms what man never knew as a certainty without the Bible, that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Then the second verse puts us in presence of another great fact, which has been, no doubt, illustrated by geologists, but in no way are we indebted to them for ascertaining it. Here it is in the Bible without them, and before geology was heard of: “And the earth was without form, and void.” It is clearly a condition totally different from the first verse. Not a word about the *heaven* being without form, and void; the *earth* alone was so. Some, no doubt, have found a difficulty because of the word “and” (!) being introduced, as if it linked the second verse with the first in point of time; but this is all a mistake. If the word “and” had not

* Thus even Bishop Horsley writes, in his *Biblical Criticism*, i. 111: “The creation of the world, as it is described in the first chapter of Genesis, was not a single instantaneous act, but a work performed by gradual stages in the time of six successive days, or entire revolutions of the globe of the earth upon its axis.”

been here, the first verse might have been taken for a sort of summary of all the rest of the chapter; and thus hasty readers, and preachers, and commentators have been too disposed to treat it in expounding the chapter. They imagined that God's creating in the beginning was set out in detail under the various days that afterwards follow; but that little conjunction precludes such an interpretation. Compare such statements elsewhere, as for instance, in Genesis v.: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him." There we have the absence of the conjunction. The reason is that the first words are an abstract of that which the rest of the chapter brings before us. Had there been no "*and*" at the beginning of the second verse of the first chapter, the common (or at least what used to be the common) construction might plead some show of reason for itself, as far as the language of Moses is concerned. There might have then been an impeachment of the accuracy of the divine record. As it stands, there is thorough and manifest correctness. The only persons that have made mistakes are either Christians with upright wishes, who have merely attached their own erroneous notion to the scripture, or men of science who similarly mis-reading it have forthwith sought to malign it. There was no just ground for either; the fault was in both, not in God's word.*

* If the LXX. meant *δέ* in an adversative sense, as many have done since, I believe them mistaken, and that the conjunction is simply a particle of connexion. The true interpretation is confirmed by the substantive verb which in Hebrew is never, as often in English and

“And the earth was without form, and void.” This is a second fact. There is no limitation of the space that intervened between the original creation of heaven and earth in verse 1, and the dreary ruin depicted in the earlier clause of verse 2. We are not told what were the grounds on which God dissolved the fabric of the earth He had created, and brought it into the chaotic condition so strikingly set forth. But I repeat my assertion that the creation of a chaos, or the existence of a chaos as a primeval state, is a heathen and not a biblical thought. What the Bible says is quite inconsistent with such an idea. “Heaven and earth,” we have seen, does not mean chaos, but a state of things with an order necessarily distinguishing them. What use God may have made of the earth as it originally came from His fiat is another question, and our curiosity is not indulged by the Bible. The fact, however, is certain; and it is a fact of the utmost moment, and of very great interest in its place. All the facts that have been discovered of the earliest conditions of the earth fall in with it; that is to say, they point to a time when the animal, or even vegetable kingdom, when life in its lowest forms, as yet had no existence on the globe. Is there no difficulty then? I grant you that man has the utmost possible difficulty in arriving at anything more than a First Cause. What the nature of that First Cause is, how can he tell? The very other tongues, a mere copula. The *facts*, therefore, of verses 1 and 2 are connected; the *times* are kept expressly separate. In the beginning (let it be ever so far back) was the creation; subsequently—but how long after is not said—was the chaotic confusion of the earth. Here Dr. Kennedy (*Donnellan Lectures*, ii. 12, &c.) seems to be in evident error.

same principle that leads him to feel there must be a First Cause forbids his understanding it. The reason of this too it is not hard to see. Man himself infers a first cause, but he, a caused being, never can *per se* understand a first cause that is not caused. It is outside and above the sphere and nature of his own being. There man feels, and alas! would hide, his own ignorance. But here in Scripture all is plain. We are told that all things above and below had a First Cause, and that He who caused them to be was God, who by the absolute act of His own will was pleased so to create (verse 1). Then (verse 2) follows another fact—all the earthly part of the creation completely dissolved, and in hopeless confusion. I shall prove that scripture refers to the same words elsewhere; never as the original state, but a state to which God was pleased to reduce the object in question. The importance of this cannot be over-estimated in such a theme as the present.

Thus in Isaiah xxxiv. 11 we have these same expressions once more. In describing the judgment upon the land of Edom, we read, "The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion (חֲרָה), and the stones of emptiness" (בִּהְיוֹ). No man can say that this is a description of the original state of the land of Edom: it is a condition to which God's judgment brought it down. This, then, confirms the interpretation already given of Genesis i. 2. The second verse is brought in as an additional statement to the first (not an exhibition of the state which was before us in the first verse). But, further, the use made of the terms elsewhere (as Isaiah xxxiv.) shows that

they suit there a condition to which God consigned what He had made, and certainly do not describe that in which He made or created it.

Again Jeremiah iv. 23 refers to these same terms, and clearly in allusion to Genesis. There the prophet writes in view of the land of Israel and the judgments impending,—“I beheld the earth” (it was a prophetic vision), “and, lo, it was *without form*, and *void*; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.” That is, it is not at all a vision looking back to a primeval condition, but one that looks onward to the utter desolation with which God would visit a particular land, the terms being pointedly chosen from the second verse of Genesis i. What I gather is very simple :—that there is an analogy in the use to which the Spirit of God applies His own words; that Gen. i. 2 is a description of the state, not in which God made the earth, but to which He was pleased subsequently to reduce it.

I may be met by the objection that this represents God as capricious. Far be the thought! Was not, is not, He that made the heavens and the earth all-wise? Ah! it would have been a poor thing for man, as he is now, if God had not broken up the earth :—an imperfect provision, if He had not convulsed it, and many a time too. I am not prepared to endorse, still less to oppose, what men of science, who had, as far as I am aware, no thought of illustrating the Bible, have affirmed as to the number and character of the pre-Adamite convulsions. There is one that I could name among the

most exact and comprehensive of modern writers on palæontology, and he, if I recollect aright, affirms that some nine and twenty times the crust of this earth was broken up, before man was made to dwell here below; that nine and twenty times there have been successive acts of God's power, in bringing in what was new on the basis of the breach of the old. And suppose you that all this was arbitrary? Certainly I am not going in anywise to bind my faith or yours to that which M. D'Orbigny says, however competent he may have been to give a grave and ripe judgment. Convulsions may have happened nineteen times, or nine and twenty, or thirty-nine.

To my mind it is rather a precarious affirmation, the exact number on a point so delicate and difficult to ascertain with precision. Nevertheless, the general outline I cannot but hold to be as sure a series of facts as any other in geological science—that God was pleased to form successive deposits, and after each—or, at any rate, at intervals—violently to break up the surface that He formed. And so far from this being without a worthy purpose, it was the evidently wise course of things, if He destined the earth—after these vast geological eras—to become the home of man, or at least the sphere for man's activity and responsibility in such a world as this. How else would man have reached what lay in the bowels of the earth? How else could he have availed himself, for instance, of the buried coal measures? How else could he have turned to account the minerals deposited in its depths? How else could he have quarried the lime, the marbles, and other stones concealed there? On the one hand, all this

chain of successive convulsions was requisite for man, when formed on the earth; but on the other hand, it was entirely incompatible with man, or indeed, any other being, when living on the face of the earth; because these violent disruptions, of course, would have been fatal, as they were when various genera and species of living creatures did exist at each epoch when the crash took place; and consequently the tale is told by the vast beds of fossilized objects, as we all know—when God laid down not merely unstratified formations, but strata with an ascending scale of organic being, before the Adamic earth.

But all this was not without a beneficent design marked with the utmost wisdom and goodness too, as all that God does and says must be. So that although He was pleased here to pass over these geologic eras silently, leaving it to man who was about to avail himself of means to discover such facts by his observation, and by that mind with which God had endowed him, yet He has left ample verge for all in verse 2. It was natural that man should survey that world on which he was made, and of which he was constituted the lord. One can understand that man goes forth and enters with interest into the conditions of the world that was put under him; for things here below were his proper domain. Naturally therefore man seeks to understand the world which has been set in his heart (Eccles. iii. 11), where he finds himself now an inhabitant. It is perfectly certain that all the previous states differed more or less from each other, as they were totally different from the conditions in which man was made and tested in Eden.

Let me here state another patent fact. It is after all

this that the days come in. It is quite a mistake to count them long periods. They are nothing of the sort. I see no reason to doubt that they are simple cycles of twenty-four hours. If long periods had been meant, do you think that God would have spoken about "the evening and the morning"? Such a phrase would be an extraordinary formula for introducing any other than a natural day. That there were long periods may be quite true; but then they are left room for, and not described. They would come in before if not after the state described in verse 2—once certainly, and perhaps twice. There might be suites of long periods for aught we know. It does not appear, as far as my reading goes, that there is anything of real trustworthiness as to these periods except the general fact, which is a matter of fair inference from what has been turned up here below. But here it is, and here only, in my opinion, that you must insert these long eras. Grant that there may have been forty thousand years for one period, what is there to alarm in that? Be it so: I care not how many millions of years you claim. Supposing that scheme true, there is room for the geologic ages; scripture says nothing to the contrary, but leaves abundant space for all, and so much the more remarkably because at first sight such interstices might be easily passed over.

It is not the part of wisdom for a Christian to deny facts. Why reject the phenomena which indicate states not only of the earth, but of living creatures there before Adam was made, *i.e.* before the six days? Otherwise, how can we escape the supposition, that God was pleased to make vast quantities of fossilized objects,

giving the appearance of having lived on the earth, which never did? Are you prepared to accept the notion that God studiously gave a semblance of that which was not true? There are remains of animals, and animals too that were evidently made with distinct objects, and with characteristics altogether different from those of any animals to be found now, and supposing a correspondent state of things (as for instance, when the world was a vast marsh and enormous heat prevailed). There is no ground whatever to doubt these facts. I do not see that a Christian shows his wisdom, or his faith either, by denying anything of the sort. Granted that being unrevealed it is not a point for faith; it is a thing that man must ascertain and prove if he can, and thus it is a question of knowledge or ignorance. One cannot talk correctly about faith in science. Faith has nothing to do with science, nor again has science with faith. What the scientific men have to do is to collect and marshal their facts; then let them and others judge their conclusions. This does not appear to me at all arrogant,—but what every soul who can ought to do—every one who takes the trouble of making himself master of the facts they present. It does not follow that the most diligent and successful collectors of facts are the best deducers from them. This may or may not be. A wise man has not a word to say against science itself or known facts. I do complain of the precipitancy and evident animus with which many men have chosen to use what they could in an unformed and crude state of science to contradict the word of God. Neither wisdom nor reverence appears in such ways.

Thus, we have now had the two grand facts with

which the chapter opens—the original creation, and, secondly, another separate fact, but the next that is stated,—the chaotic condition into which the earth was reduced, and, as far as the analogy of scripture shows, by God's act—by His judgment—for wise reasons.

But there is more evidence still. There is a passage in Isaiah which seems to me formally to contradict the notion that God created the earth in a state of chaos. As to heaven it is not pretended; it is only a question of the earth. We shall best see the importance of this by and by. Now, in a well-known passage of Isaiah (xlv. 18), the Spirit of God is explicit that God did not make the earth in the chaotic condition which is familiar to all the readers of ancient mythology. It is a statement which made a considerable impression on my own mind, because in it the Spirit of God seems distinctly to contradict the idea that the earth was created in emptiness or confusion. "For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it: he hath established it; he *created it not in vain*: he formed it to be inhabited." Our translators in using the expression "in vain" evidently turned *תֵּוַהֲלֵה* aside from the literal import. The fact is, it is very much more forcible when taken in connection with the passage in Genesis i. 2. One of the terms Moses employed in verse 2 is used by Isaiah, who declares that Jehovah did *not create* the earth *so*. What conclusion can one draw but that Moses described an after state, and not the primary result of God's creation? The traditional interpretation sets the legislator at variance with the prophet, and must be abandoned for the view already given, which maintains their per-

fect harmony. When created, God did not create the earth a waste; when it became such, it was a subsequent state.

There is another fact also on which I would just desire to say a word—the remarkable precision of the terms that the Spirit of God has used on this subject. Hebrew is not by any means a copious language, but is comparatively poor. It is not at all equal to our own in possessing shades of synonym; but for all that it is worthy of note that, as to the matter now in hand, which was to be conveyed by revelation to man, the language that the Holy Ghost first employed has materials which, for precision, as far as I know, are found in none other. Consider how the terms which we translate “creating,” “making,” “forming” or “fashioning,” here and elsewhere, are used—with what force and appropriateness—in the word of God.

It may help to put this in a clear light before those ignorant of it if we turn to Exodus xx., which, perhaps, may be in the minds of some as bearing out the common notion that the earth was created in six days. In the eleventh verse of that chapter it is written, “In six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.” No doubt a great many people, in the habit of hearing this, have confounded it with the opening words of Genesis i. But there is a marked difference, instead of any such confusion. If scripture said that Jehovah *created* heaven and earth in six days, there would be reasonable ground for the thought. Nowhere is such an assertion to be found in the word of God. What we do find is the *creation* of heaven and earth in the

beginning; but when you come to the six days, it is the *making* of heaven and earth. So manifest is the difference at once. "Create" (בָּרָא), if we are to distinguish the words, refers to the efficient cause; "make" (עָשָׂה) points to the formal cause; and they have another word (יָצַר), which brings in the material.

It is very evident, therefore, that Hebrew—poor a language as it may be in some respects—is exquisitely precise in these very particulars. No doubt the reason is obvious. It was God's pleasure to reveal His mind as to the outward creation in the Hebrew tongue. And what makes it the more striking is, that Greek—which is such a finely expressive language in most other respects—seems to fail not a little in this. They had no words at all competent to express these shades of meaning. They were driven to other ways of putting the idea. There is always a possibility in every tongue of expressing thought; but this may, in some cases, require a circuitous method. In John i. 3 we have creation alluded to. In the first verse we read: "In the beginning was the Word"—clearly this ascends, as often noticed, before Genesis i. 1. In the one beginning God *acted*; in the other the Word *was*, the uncreated expresser of God, before His power was put forth to call anything or one into being—the Word that was with God, and that was God. "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him." There is a beautiful exactness in the Greek expression, that is not found in the English. *Ἐγένετο* is not adequately answered either by the Hebrew or the English "made." Properly speaking, it does not mean anything of the sort, but "caused to be." The Word gave to all things existence.

This seems to be the best Greek method of expressing creation, if it can be expressed in that tongue by one word. "All things were brought into being by him; they began"—or, rather, "*were caused to be*"—"by him." Such is the force of the term. But this does not at all match the admirable excellence of the Hebrew tongue, where we have God's own absolute act referred to. Such is the essence of the word "*create*," and consequently it is invariably attributed to God. We never read of any created being of whom it is predicated, unless in a figure or evident accommodation. It could not be applied to the act of a creature. Not that it always means created out of nothing. It is the word for this, but not for this only. Hence it is applied to the fifth day's work—the first production of animal life for the Adamic world (verse 21), and still more emphatically to that latest task of the sixth day, when God gave being to the chief of this lower creation (ver. 27). We ought always to gather the value of a word from its usage; to the use that scripture makes of it we may wisely, and must implicitly, bow.

Thus, without going farther, this very chapter of Genesis shows that, while the word here translated "*create*" is proper to describe God's origination of being where there was none before, at the same time it may express a particular act of God's will where there existed materials of which God made use. For instance, where He created the sea animals, and where He created man in the image of God, it is evident that in neither case does it mean without pre-existent materials. Here we know from the account that such there were. The statements of scripture are incon-

sistent, therefore, with the notion that the word *create* invariably means creating out of nothing. At the same time, while this modification of the word's meaning is allowed, it remains true that, if God would express creation in its full import where there was nothing before, this is the word and none other. Where is the word beside so admirably suited to convey it?

If some suppose it a defect that the same word is used with such shades of difference, let me tell them that their objection makes a demand on Hebrew which is not met by any other language—which, if it could be met, would involve mere barbarism even if practicable to be remembered and used; in fact, there is no language where words do not express varieties of meaning. If the most precise of tongues did not admit of some modification in the use of its terms, such a catalogue would be an intolerable burden. If one were bound to use a new word for every new thought, how cumbrous would human speech become! Man would sink under the weight of that which he had to carry in mind, and utter in its proper time and place. But enough of this, which I merely notice to guard the unreflecting from a common misapprehension.

When God, then, expresses not the first origination of the universe, but the constituting of the earth an abode for man, we find the plain fact, that in the six days Jehovah, the God of Israel, is said to have made all things (according to the fourth commandment, which views the whole scene as we have it now, not as primarily created). Accordingly, after the Spirit of God has been brought in as moving upon the face of the waters, we are shown in the six days' work the making

of the earth for man as formed by the hand of God here below.

Let us briefly trace their course. "And God said, Let there be light." Here, again, it is well to direct your attention to the words. A well known critic of antiquity singled out the sentence as a fine instance of the sublime. But there is far more in it. Probably many of my hearers are aware that there have been conflicting theories about light, and that the men of science have not quite settled the question yet among themselves (that is to say, whether it depend on emission from a certain point which you may call the fountain, or whether light be caused to act by vibrations). There is thus a wide discordance between the corpuscular theory and the idea of an undulating ether. Further, it is known that most scientific moderns have been disposed to give up the Newtonian theory of corpuscles in favour of the vibration theory of a later date. It may be remarked here that the manner in which God's word introduces the action of light suits the more refined view. For certainly there is a careful abstinence from making an entity of light. It is not put forward as some material thing created, but in such a way as to express a power, whatever its seat might be. Thus the peculiarity of its mention makes it perfectly consistent with the supposition that it is merely produced by undulations of ether.

This is the more remarkable, because no one can pretend that the theory was known. I am aware how scholars have permitted themselves to look down on the sons of Israel. I am aware that to your Tacituses and Gibbons they were the most contemptible of mankind.

I am aware that the poets cannot conceal their bitter scorn. Nevertheless, how comes to pass the startling fact, that there have been heaps of philosophers before and since these scornful poets and historians, ancient or modern, but the only account of creation which survives is found in the simple yet sublime words of the Hebrew Moses? Many of them, if not all, wrote of the universe since Moses; but where will you put C. Ptolemy—one of the greatest names—now? Here shines day by day the same majestic statement in the word of God. The more you seek to degrade the Hebrews, the more you really, though unwittingly, exalt the God who employed them to be the vehicles of communicating what none else knew. Where is any other document of the kind that stands its ground like Genesis i.? If there be, show me it or the man that wrote it. Where is the theory of the earth, up to this year of grace 1869, which has yet given such a graphic, comprehensive, or exact statement? And this is the more admirable, because it is given in a book meant for men, women, and children; in a book expressly designed to cast the light of God on a world involved in moral darkness; in a book capable of being understood from the first day it was written, yet at the same time so written that nothing shall ever be found to contradict it up to the last day.

This is what I claim for the Bible. That anything has ever really contradicted it, on grounds that will bear investigation, I have yet to learn. It has not been for want of will or effort; it has not been for want of learning or science. I do not pretend to be so ignorant as not to have looked into what men have written against

the Bible. I have examined what has been said in ancient as well as modern times. But I have not seen—and I challenge any other person to show me—an account of creation that carries on its own face such an admirable combination. There is a statement of facts that does not go beyond what men in olden time could profit by and understand; and yet not only does it survive all the changing thought of mankind, but it gathers fresh illustration of its truth from the advance of science wherever the latter becomes so mature and fixed as to carry general conviction along with itself.

That a man living at so very early a day (as Moses unquestionably did) has written in the same brief sentence that which one of the greatest wits of antiquity, and finest critics of style, cites as challenging universal admiration for its simple sublimity; and that he has at the same time given his account with an exactness that surpasses what the illustrious Newton displayed, only within a comparatively short remove from our own time—to me is the more gratifying, because it came from the remote history of a very little people in an obscure corner of the earth. It is no use to tell me that Moses was learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians. The wisdom of the Egyptians in these matters would have only misled him. Produce me such a testimony of their wisdom, show me from their hieroglyphics, or from any other source you like, that they understood the course of creation as Moses did. There may have been some points common; but they were points common to many others besides Egyptians. They were relics of current tradition, in some way or other generally received. But were the special salient points of

Moses ever endorsed by the philosophers of Greece, Rome, or Egypt? The Egyptians held eternal matter, primeval night, and the origin of their gods from earth and heaven, not the God who in the beginning created them and all things.

It seems to me, then, that the scorn of incredulity is, as usual, exceedingly misplaced; and that Moses must not be viewed as a genius who had by depth of intellect penetrated into nature's secrets. They are not to be rifled thus. Genius may develope itself in poetry; it may happily blossom and bear fruit in a waste of seemingly barren facts. But the facts of creation are an impossibility for mind to conceive and calmly state without exposing itself to successful attacks from all sorts of shafts of a hostile world. Not so! There is One above all the geniuses, scholars, and men of science, who gave them life and breath and all things; He it was who wrote by His servant Moses.

We must take note of another fact also. Why is it that light is introduced here? It is no use to say that it is all according to phenomena. It is not natural to have spoken of it here, unless the allegation were the simple truth. Moses surely had done otherwise had he been writing according to observation. And you know that this is the boasted but really base philosophy of the hour; you are aware that men are now making experience everything, and that what Hume put forth in his scepticism of a former day is now the fashionable empiricism of this day. They call it positivism. No more degrading system ever dragged down men's minds since the world began; nothing will more thoroughly corrupt the hearts. Such was the fate of the early

positivists in heathen times. It will be more deadly now.

But however this may be judged, here we have a fact not discernible by experience at all. And if it be a truth, how was it learnt? Who that merely gathered his thoughts from the world around and above would have brought in light before the sun, moon, and stars? Why then did Moses burden his account of creation by that which was not at all a fact derivable from observation, but rather a difficulty? It is a strange statement at first sight. If it really set forth the truth, it is easily accounted for. Nor am I in the least denying that light may have been caused to act at previous states of the world. It is vain, therefore, to object to scripture, that there were animals before man which had eyes, and consequently saw; that even those little animals (I need hardly say I mean the Trilobites,) that have been discovered soon after the first traces of animal life, noticed in the formations of the Silurian epoch, are remarkable for their singular and powerful structure of vision. There is no doubt of the facts, and I would not weaken their force in the least. Their ocular provision indicates fulness and power. Some of these must have been able to look round about in a way beyond most beings now on the earth. At the same time, all this is not at all inconsistent with the statement of Moses. It is evident that a state of chaos might cause totally different conditions from what had existed before, and might forbid that vibration that was necessary to call out light. But here we find that, after this utter confusion, light is caused to be. If animals existed before those described for the Adamic earth,

there may have been light before also. What is said under the six days is about the earth as it was to be placed under man.

Another thing may be observed. A certain analogy may well have been in part, if not wholly, between the great geological periods, and these six days. You are aware, of course, that Hugh Miller is the popular advocate of this idea, carried out so far as to identify them by making the days mean these vast successive eras. Now it is not for me to speak slightly of such a man; at the same time, I believe he was mistaken. Do I deny the long periods? Not at all. Do I reject the analogy between them and these days? In no wise. Can we not understand vast periods characterized by God's building up this globe gradually and in successive exertions of His power, and that the six days should go over the work again after the last great catastrophe, before man, only on a circumscribed and very brief scale, for our race to dwell on the earth—yet similar, in certain grand outlines, to that which had occupied God in the immense tracts of duration which preceded Adam? There appears to me not the slightest ground for setting the one thought against the other. Both may be perfectly true, and in point of fact I believe that so it was.

Doubtless you are aware of a comparatively new set of philosophers, more daring in their speculations than the old heathen.* They assert that everything has grown up from a nebula; but what the nebula grew out of no man can tell—not even these experts. Of this only they are sure, that they owe their origin not to God

* See Appendix.

but to a nebula, unless this be their God. I hope to show, before I have done with this chapter, that the scheme is as false as the facts of science are true; that God's word makes all plain, and, in point of fact, falls in with the most thorough and comprehensive observation, as well as with conscience; for conscience has a good deal to do with these matters, though it may not appear so at first sight. There is a will in all this restless speculation. There is a willing ignorance of that which does not suit. There is a desire to get rid of God, and consequently of creation.

As to the notion of development, let me tell you that God has taken pains, both above and below, to expose the falsity. As a general fact, it is quite clear that from the lower classes of being there is an ascending scale. But the moment you make it absolute and exclusive, you contradict facts. I deny the assumption first from this,—that God made angels before He made men. I suppose you will not dispute the fact that angels are a superior class of beings. Now we know for certain, that when the foundations of the earth were laid, "the morning stars sang together," as Job says, "and all the sons of God shouted for joy." God has taken pains, therefore, to guard against such a system.

This, by the by, illustrates the remarkable ways of God in the Bible. It is not arranged as a mere book of geometry, where one proposition depends on a preceding one, and all form, so to speak, a regularly connected chain. The Bible must be read, and read again and again as a whole; and one grand reason why many make so poor a use of it is, that they cherish favouritism so much as to neglect the greater part of Holy

Writ. And those who teach are apt to have their favourite texts, so that it fares ill with the Bible among both teachers and taught. I do not say that God does not bless the most partial use of His book; but I am sure that it will most amply repay every Christian who reads it as a whole. And let me assure you that the best recipe against infidelity is thus to read the Bible. How many of those who disbelieve it have so read it? That they have read parts of it I can suppose, as well as those who have feebly endeavoured to upset their statements. But it is a rare thing to meet with souls that read all the Bible with a spirit of faith. Many read it as a duty or religious task. Can such as study thus expect to enter in and enjoy? There is a numerous class of persons who get through the Bible in a year, or something of that kind; but this is far short of what I am now urging. Seek to understand the Bible: it is only possible by faith. There is no other way. Not by understanding do we believe, but by faith we understand as well as set to our seal that God is true.

Again, for the dissipation of the dismal idea of development, take the fact of the superiority of the early remains of the Saurian order above existing objects of the same kind. Can they gainsay this? They know it is true. They are perfectly aware that the idea of development in the Saurian order is a fiction, that the superior objects of that family are not those that in point of time followed as the theory would require. A single, positive, and well-defined fact of the kind suffices. No doubt there are others. Without pretending to any minute acquaintance with the subject, I know this much at least, and on their own authority, or rather on facts

which cannot be disputed. Will they say that we should not bow to facts? I do not dispute them, whether it be facts of criticism as to the text of scripture, or ascertained facts in the outward world of science. I do not question that facts have a meaning; but the hypothesis some seek to build upon those facts ought not to be too readily accepted.

We may now pass on to look briefly at the following days. "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven."

How comes this? It is another difficulty at first sight. Did we not hear of heaven in the first verse? To be sure we did; and here we are told of heaven again. What then,—contradiction? Not in the least degree: only another heaven—that is all. And is this, then, not true? Why this other heaven? Because man was about to be made. The circumambient atmosphere, extending upwards too, was essential not only to man's existence here below, but to vegetable life, to the due activity of light and heat, as well as to all forms of animated existence.

We find under the second day, then, the lower heaven. And that this is not a merely Jewish idea, but of God, is perfectly certain from the New Testament; for there we read how Paul was caught up (at any rate "a man in Christ," who, I have no doubt, was Paul) into the third heaven. We can easily understand, therefore, that at the beginning God made two heavens,

and that in this case He made the lowest one. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here we find He made another, man being about to be made. And this is called heaven too. They are all called the heavens. There is the heaven of His presence; the heaven of the stars, planets, and other astronomical objects; and the atmospheric heaven necessary for man and living things here below.

Again we find, as that which occupies the third day, that the waters under the heaven are gathered together to one place, and the dry land appears. "And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas." And then the earth is made to bring forth grass—that lovely array, as it were, for the earth—full of beauty as well as beneficence. "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit after his kind."

I grant you that modern science denies genera and species everywhere. Development is in effect a denial of this. The Lamarckian notion, of which we have a representative in a rather celebrated living Englishman, sets it all aside. Do they really gain much by it? I do not see that the blotting out of kinds in fruit-trees or herbs is a great acquisition of science. To me it seems to be a blotting out of the land-marks, not of science only, but of distinctions that date from the workmanship of God. It seems to be thoroughly spurious—merely one of those dark clouds that for a season flit across the horizon of science as over other worlds. It may be fashionable, but this does not make it the better. Here we are told, for God has written, that the different herbs had their kinds. And this is one of the great

facts of the vegetable kingdom. The simplest gardener, that thinks as well as labours, knows this. Since man observed facts on the earth, when was it seen or heard that an apple-tree brought forth pears, or that a pear-tree bore apples? They can prove nothing but the liveliness of their own imagination. These dreamers contradict not only scripture and science, but the facts gathered by observation in every land.

Again, on the fourth day we hear of the luminaries. And here mark the consistency and propriety of the language. It is not said that God then created them, but simply, "Let there be lights in the firmament." It is not light now, but "lights," or light-bearers, "in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and 'it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night (the stars also)." These last are just referred to, and it was the more important because, as is generally known, many of those that had the greatest weight in the ancient world adored the stars. Even Plato, although a western, was sufficiently tinctured by orientalism to yield to the monstrous figment that the earth is a sort of living creature. As the philosophy of Aristotle directly tended to atheism (for it was low-minded empiricism), so the philosophy of Plato led into, if it was not downright, pantheism. Such was the difference between them. Pantheism, though in sound opposed, is really near akin to atheism.

God here cuts off the ground of all these delusions, as well as the objection of moderns, who too hastily as-

sumed that the stars are said to be created at this time. It is not so. No matter how long the space required for the light from more distant stars to reach the earth, it is evident that room is left for all by what is said, and not said, in verses 1, 14, 16. Had Moses written that they were *created* on the fourth day, it would have contradicted the facts; but as it is expressed, not only there is no contradiction, but obviously the Bible is wiser than either the friends or the foes of revelation. Compare what Moses wrote with any philosopher you please in the ancient world. Whose writings have failed to contradict the facts of modern science? How comes it that Moses did not? Whose care was it that preserved him from here implying—as many divines have been too hasty to say for him—the *creation* of the lights.* A Scotch university professor not long since insisted to me that Moses affirmed it. He was so ready to believe that scripture contradicts science, that he had not even weighed these few words with care. Had Plato or Aristotle written as Moses did, how loud the boasting, and how close the scrutiny, not to “hint a fault,” but to set forth the excellence of their philosophy! Scripture needs no apology. All I ask is a more exact attention to the word of God on the part of those who venture to assail it. It would be wiser at least to read it first.

You see where those are that speak about the enor-

* Thus Horsley (*Biblical Crit.* i. 4) says, “Neither the sun nor any of the celestial luminaries were in being when light was produced. For light was the work of the first day; the luminaries of the fourth.” Also (p. 5), “The celestial bodies were set in the firmament in their respective places, when they were first created; and they were at the same time appointed to be for lights, to give light upon the earth; and to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years.”

mous length of time necessary for light to be transmitted—though this again is more than they ought to assume—at any rate for the action of light by means of the heavenly orbs. But there is no difficulty whatever. When God created the heavens, did He make them empty? Did He not create also the host of heaven? What about the sun, and moon, and stars? He created them sometime. That they were made we find elsewhere in this chapter; not, I presume, the absolute moment of their creation, but of their being made to serve for the use of man on the earth. What other uses they served we are not there informed. That they were God's handiwork, and for man's use, as creatures of God here below—not objects of worship, as in heathenism, He does explain. Surely there was wisdom in saying this and no more. There was considerate goodness in what He said, and in what He withheld.

On the fifth day the waters were to "bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." Here, too, a contradiction, I must tell you, has been discovered by certain critics. Chapter ii. shows that fowl were made out of the earth; but Genesis i. 20, they say, intimates that fowl were made out of the waters. Superficial cavillers! Genesis i. says nothing of the sort, but is perfectly consistent with chap. ii. 19. Look at the margin, not the text, of i. 20 in your common English Bible. The objection is exceedingly illustrative of the danger of reasoning not from scripture, but from a mistake that has crept into a translation of it. The first thing we have always to do is to ascertain the word of God and its meaning as accurately as possible. What this verse teaches is not

that the waters were to bring forth fowl, as it appears to do in our English version ; but "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." The flying of the fowl in that sphere is the point, and not the statement that the waters gave birth to them. There is no such intimation in scripture. What men have reasoned on, therefore, is merely their own misconception, and nothing more.

On the next and sixth day we have the land animals produced, and, finally, man made in the image of God, after His likeness, with dominion over the lower creation assigned to them, and God blessing them. But mark the difference. It is only when man is thus about to be made that God says, "*Let us.*" Oh, can you not appreciate the spirit of such a word as this? Can you not admire the way in which God, as it were, sits in council on the creation of man? Can you not judge between the physiologist that would make an ape his progenitor, and the Bible that reveals God thus creating man in His own image? Which is the more noble? Which is the more degrading? Of no other creature is it said, "Let us make," when it was a question of the earth, the sea, nay, of light itself—nothing of the sort. "Light be," said Elohim, "and light was." But as to the others, He wrought, but with no such preface as "Let us make." Here it is for the first and only time: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion." What can be farther from development? Such an idea is altogether foreign; and, indeed, the existence of different races and kinds has been engraved by God most legibly on the world of nature; for although man by his wicked ingenuity

may cross the breed, as *e. g.* of the animals that were put under his dominion, the result is always to induce sterility—the standing witness, on the one hand, against man's meddling, and, on the other, for the order in which God meant His creation to proceed. Thus is set before us succinctly, but plainly, the general course of creation.

A few remarks I would make on chap. ii. before I close.

The sabbath day is introduced at the beginning, though in truth the first three verses of chapter ii. belong properly to chapter i. That is, they form a part of the great week of God's work and its rest. And there is a very beautiful connection with this which meets an objection of modern times on which a word may be well bestowed. You are aware that German authors have insisted loudly (whether the idea was originated by them is more than I would say) that we are indebted to different writers for the first book of Moses (just as it used to be the fashion of the Wolffians to divide Homer among I know not how many rhapsodists, though, in point of fact, this created far greater difficulties than it was supposed to remove; for it is far harder to imagine half a dozen Homers than one). One thing is very certain, that Moses, according to these sages, must have been a weak foolish man, who adopted at least two different accounts, without a suspicion of what is to them obvious, that the one writer contradicted the other. Such is the discovery of modern criticism. Let me say what I am sure is the truth on this: I dare not venture to put it forward as an opinion. It seems to me a sin to state anything that rests on the clear testimony of God's word as open

to a doubt. If it is a mere question of your judgment of this fact or that, or your individual estimate of the person putting it forward, or your comparative view of the circumstances passing around, it is an opinion; and of what value can it be? You are yourself the measure of it,—your ability, with your special opportunities, or general experience, and nothing more. But when we come to the word of God, we should pass from the region of human opinions. What distinguishes it is that therein God speaks, and His people, yea, every soul, is bound to hear. For my own part, I am convinced, and I trust you are no less than myself, that God has written His word intelligibly. By this I do not mean that any part of it is according to the measure of man; but that it is all written for man to God's glory, and in His wisdom. Thus, what God has been pleased to put in the plainest possible language may be beyond our fathoming; but at the same time it is not beyond our understanding and enjoying, according to our measure of faith, though we may also find out that it is unfathomable. But ever so deep as it is, and infinitely exceeding man's plummet to reach the bottom, it is as clear as it is profound, and not the mud or shallows of the creature.

I am persuaded, then, that these erudite writers have never gone below the surface of the wonderful introduction of Genesis, and that their speculations are not only idle but ignorant. They tell us that the author of chap. i. was a man that knew, and only knew, Elohim; and consequently they call this the Elohist document. Then, from chap. ii. 3, because Jehovah-Elohim occurs, they will have this to be the Jehovistic portion, or a sort of mingling of the two—the Elohist-Jehovistic.

The fact is, that up to Gen. ii. 3 we have God (Elohim), and from verse 4 we have the LORD God (Jehovah-Elohim). But that there were two different and inconsistent writers is gratuitous and false. It was one and the same writer throughout; and, so far from inconsistency, each feature is perfection for its own object. Why, then, the difference? The reason is plain, sure, and instructive. When God presents Himself in contrast with man, or the creature, as the originator of all, the invariable term is God (Elohim). It is the proper word, and always so used throughout scripture. Consequently, if the term "Elohim" had *not* been used by Moses in the first chapter of Genesis, it would have gone to prove that Moses could not be inspired. Exactness of thought requires that the Creator should be presented thus in the broadest form of contrast with the creature. On the other hand, besides being the self-existing originator, the Mighty One that caused to be what was not, God is pleased to enter into relationship with man, and indeed with creation. Now the special term in the Old Testament for relationship is Jehovah.

Besides, there was something peculiar in the manner in which God was pleased to enter into relationship then with man and creation, because all was unfallen. The consequence is that it is neither Elohim alone nor Jehovah alone in Genesis ii. iii., but Jehovah-Elohim. Proofs will appear presently (and they might be increased) that this is precisely what it ought to be, and that any other form of presentation would not so exactly have suited the context. If we suppose (what the chapters themselves assert) that the God of creation was pleased to enter into relationship

with man, and this at first in an exceptional way before sin entered the world, the writer ought to have adopted one title in chap. i. (and none other than Elohim), and another in chap. ii. (and none other than Jehovah-Elohim). No doubt a revolution is stated to have come soon afterwards, when God accordingly changes His name in order to suit that altered state. After the fall He simply calls Himself Jehovah. Thus the writer, being inspired (and probably far beyond his own measure of understanding the force of all he wrote), does not present the combined form in the way that is found in chapters ii. and iii., where we have first the relationship and then the test and fall.

Consequently it is evident that the true key to the use of these terms is not the supposition of two or three different writers or documents, followed by a stupid compiler who did not perceive their mutual inconsistency. The very reverse is the truth; Moses—wise as he was—had an infinitely higher than human or Egyptian wisdom to guide him in all he wrote. None but God could have so furnished and so guided him. With all the advantages of observed facts on every side, with the incomparably greater privilege of the fullest subsequent revelation, we are but learning better in our own age the unspeakable value of what Moses wrote in that early day. I do not believe that this is because Moses rose in stature so highly above all men, from his day to ours, but because the only true God inspired Moses and all the other writers of the Bible.

The truth, then, is that in this chapter ii. you will find everything savours of, or chimes in with, the establishment of relationships. "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created,

in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." Observe that there is creation, and also making. This is precisely right, creation having the first rank, and making the subsequent place. "And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew : for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul." Why is this introduced in chapter ii. rather than in chapter i. ? For I affirm that you could not transplant this into the first chapter, and that the true cause depends, not upon a different writer, but upon quite another object and line of truth. The design here is not to show man made a creature, though at the head of creation. This is the subject-matter of the first chapter ; and there his dominion is fixed by God, and pointed out by the sacred historian. But in the second chapter the aim is not merely to bring out that God made man, as He made every other creature, out of the dust of the ground (reminding him of the humility of his origin), but that he had that which came direct from God in a way no other animal had.

Into whose nostrils did Jehovah-Elohim breathe the breath of life ? Into man's, and man's alone. We have no reason to think it was so with angels even. The man who was made out of the dust of the ground was not in full proper relationship with God until God breathed the breath of life into him. On this depends the immortality of the soul ; and all who dispute or doubt

this truth* fritter away its singular weight. Nor is it confined to such errorists. Those who have read Bp. Jos. Butler's works know that the great moralist failed to solve the difficulty of man's partaking in the resurrection, while other animals do not. There lies the secret. God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and thus it was he became a living soul. Every other animal became a living soul materially and without this. Man alone of all that live on the earth stands in immediate relationship to God. He may sin against Him, and he, consequently alone of all on earth, will be lost for ever. Thus the very fact that he has the breath of the LORD God in his nostrils will be the ground of his misery consequent on eternal exclusion from God. That God breathed into man, and he thus became a living soul; constitutes man's capacity for blessedness through belief of the truth, and for being so brought into the presence of God; as it is his misery when banished from Him for the rejection of Christ into the blackness of darkness for ever.

Thus when we are informed simply about creation, we hear of Elohim; when it is not Elohim, but Jehovah-Elohim, we have moral relationship; for Jehovah, I repeat, is the characteristic name of relationship in the Old Testament, as Father is in the New. In the New Testament, indeed, it is not only a God who has a

* Their arguments are for the most part the unintelligent misapplication of Old Testament texts that treat of the present life, or death, to that which is outside the world and everlasting. Thus "Thou shalt surely die," and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," are applied by them to deny the soul's unceasing existence; whereas they speak solely of God's government in this life. The New Testament has brought to light not only life and incorruptibility, but the second death and eternal judgment. The wages of sin is death, but not death only; for after death comes the judgment.

people, but a Father who has a family. That His Son became a man to die and rise again has made it possible for God, by redeeming grace, to bring us into the place of children and sons; and consequently our proper term of relationship to God is children, as His relationship to us is that of Father. But in the Old Testament Jehovah was the term revealed in due time.

Mark how all the chapter carries out the leading idea. First, we have his relationship to God in the matter of the garden, which was to be kept; but, besides, there was a moral test—he must not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Why (let me ask) was not this given in the first chapter? Because that chapter does not enter into moral relations; the second has it, because it does. Here we are in the presence of the solemn truth that God is Jehovah-God; that He is not merely a Creator, but establishes the creature, man, in relationship with Himself. Thus it is not only the Absolute, but He who is absolute chooses to form relationships between the creature and Himself. Not in the first chapter, but in the second, is this spread out before us livingly. The whole chapter proceeds on this ground.

Next we have here, and here alone, the animals brought for Adam to name. Thus is shown his relationship to those inferior to himself. He was the one to whom they belonged. There is nothing like this in the first chapter—no bringing of animals to receive their names from Adam; yet we see how consistent it is with the grant of dominion from Elohim recounted in that chapter.

To my mind this, as far as it goes, is just perfection as the word of God must be, instead of the hotch-potch

of blunderers who strung together the inconsistent traditions of their own dark days. Such is what self-complacent unbelief has made of it. It appears to me that these critics are alike objects of horror and of compassion, and that what the Christian would desire for them is forgiveness from Him whose word they defame, because their incredulity has rendered them incapable of comprehending it. There is another, and only another, relationship that I will speak of, and this is the one that is last brought before us in the chapter. Relationship to God we have seen tested by the tree. Adam was to till the garden, and keep it, using all freely, but with his obedience tested by a single restriction. Then relationship to the creature is seen, where the various animals were brought before him to be named. But there was a help-meet wanted. How did God meet this need? In a way admirably wise, not by an absolutely fresh creation, but by forming a portion of the man into a woman, thus reminding him what the woman was and should be towards him—that she was part of himself.

Who, beforehand, could ever have thought of such a way? Who does not feel the beauty and appropriateness of the work and the word of God? How vain and unworthy the notions of the heathen as to all this! Alas! I know that some have sunk so low as to mock at this very fact, and the record of it. Perhaps they may never have known their duty toward the women dependent on them (and, if so, sure to be degraded by them). But the word of God puts everything in its place, and reminds the man, and the woman too, of that special relationship; for there was but the man and the woman—not one man and two women, but only one man and one woman. From the begin-

ning it was so; to the end it ought not to have been otherwise. Thus it was God made them; and this the Son of God cited to vindicate His Father, putting guilty selfish man to shame. But He also made the woman out of man, and man discerned the fact at once. Though he had been in a sleep, he had an instinctive sense how matters stood.

Thus everything was in chapter ii. put in its proper place—the relationship of man with woman, as before with the inferior creation, and with God Himself.

May the Lord bless all His word, and give us unfeigned confidence in all that He has written, without losing the sense of being learners! If God has given us power to teach in our little measure, may this never take us out of the place of discipleship! It is only “in part” that any of us know; and I am sure that we ought to abound in forbearance—forbearance in everything short of dishonour to Christ, yea, even this where it may be done ignorantly, provided it be not deliberate persistent rejection of the testimony of God. May that which has been just brought before you contribute, however little, to the help of the children of God; and may it win the confidence of those that are not children of God, exposing foolish speculation under the garb of wisdom, but a wisdom that is as hollow as man himself is without God!

APPENDIX.

I OUGHT perhaps to except the Phœnician theology of Sanchoniatho. Is it not striking that he who is considered to be the earliest writer of the heathen world should be approached so closely by the most recent form of the apostate philosophy of Christendom? that at least modern geology shows such

strong tendency to relapse into ancient cosmogony—philosophy in general into naturalism? It need hardly be said that the original we have not, but only some fragments of the Greek translation executed by Philo Byblius, for which we are indebted to the citation of Eusebius. (*Præp. Evang.* i. 10.) Τὴν τῶν ὅλων ἀρχὴν ὑποτίθεται ἀέρα ζοφώδη καὶ πνευματώδη, ἣ πνοὴν ἀέρος ζοφώδους, καὶ χάος θολερὸν, ἐρεβώδες· ταῦτα δὲ εἶναι ἄπειρα καὶ διὰ πολὺν αἰῶνα μὴ ἔχειν πέρασ. ὅτε δέ, φησιν, ἡράσθη τὸ πνεῦμα τῶν ἰδίων ἀρχῶν, καὶ ἐγένετο σύγκρασις, ἣ πλοκὴ ἐκείνῃ ἐκλήθη πόθος. αὕτη δὲ ἀρχὴ κτίσεως ἀπάντων. αὐτὸ δὲ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκε τὴν αὐτοῦ κτίσιν, καὶ ἐκ τῆς συμπλοκῆς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐγένετο Μῶτ. τοῦτο τινὲς φασιν ἰλύν· οἱ δὲ, ὑδατώδους μίξεως σῆψιν· καὶ ἐκ ταύτης ἐγένετο πᾶσα σπορά κτίσεως καὶ γένεσις τῶν ὅλων. “He supposes the beginning of the universe was a dark and windy air, or a breeze of dark air, and a turbid Erebus-like chaos; and that these things were infinite, and for a long time had no bound. But when the wind fell in love with its own principles, and a mixture took place, that embrace was called longing. And this was the beginning of the creation of all things. But it knew not its own creation; and from its embrace with this wind came Mot. This some call mud; others the rotting of a watery mixture; and from this came all the seed of creation, and the generation of the universe.” Wagenfeld gives us just the same in his edition of *Sanchun. Hist. Phoen.* l. i. p. 8 (save indeed that he reads οὐν for οὐκ [not] in the fifth line as cited above). It is unnecessary to quote the still wilder details that follow on the animals without sense, out of which come intelligent ones called Zophasemin (*i.e.* spectators of heaven), moulded in the shape of an egg, when Mot shone out, and sun and moon, and stars small or great.

If the Hermetic creed, transcribed by Jamblichus and popularly known in I. P. Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, could be depended on as the theology of Egypt in days as early as those of Moses, the contrast between Genesis and what we can gather of Egyptian lore would be less striking than it is. But there is strong ground to infer that this, like other productions attributed to Hermes, is due to the Neo-Platonists, who garnished the reveries of the heathens with ideas borrowed from the apostolic writings, in order the more effectually to oppose Christianity. The writings which reflect the real opinions of the ethnic world have but a negative

and melancholy interest for the believer. They illustrate and confirm the truth of St. Paul's account in Romans i. But they have as little solid value as the assaults of our own day on the word of God.

In conclusion let me say, that substantially Mr. Darwin, without knowing it probably, lands through unbelief in a like conclusion with the old Phœnicians. "In all organic beings, as far as is at present known, the germinal vesicle is the same, so that every individual organic being starts from a common origin. Professor Asa Grey has remarked, the spores and other reproductive bodies of many of the lower algæ may claim to have first a characteristically animal, and then an unequivocal vegetable, existence. Therefore, on the principle of Natural Selection with divergence of character, it does not seem incredible, that from some such low and intermediate form both animals and plants may have been developed; and if we admit this, we must admit that all the organized beings which have ever lived upon earth may have descended from some one primordial form." Thus "Natural Selection" (with "Struggle for Life," one may add from elsewhere) is the substitute for God, and the spores of the lower sea-weed are the materials of the modern hylology, which are imagined to develope into all the forms of the vegetable and the animal kingdoms till man is reached. And this childish dream, reproducing itself in the dotage of the nineteenth century, (which its own author may well call "profound ignorance of the mutual relations of the inhabitants of the earth during the many past epochs of its history,") claims to be the ripest fruit of the science of this age! It is old Epicureanism again, with its denial of a God who works all things according to His own will. Divine design is excluded; material transmutation takes its place, "the sequence of events as ascertained by us." It is easy to hide ignorance, wilful ignorance, of creation under such an expression as "Natural Selection," and to think that we give an explanation when we only utter folly.

RATIONALISM.

SYNOPSIS.

DEFINITION of Rationalism, 1. The Apostle touches on the root of this snare, 1. The Bible is of itself the witness against man's self-assertion, 1. The Bible assumes that it is the word of God, not merely that there is an element of God to be found in its pages, which reason has to discover and separate from its human elements, 1. The Lord Jesus makes the word of God the authority from which there is no appeal, 2; never guarding it to allow for the infirmity of the human instruments, 2. Proofs, 3. Rationalism admits the perfection of Jesus, and cavils at His words, 3—says that He was not above the prejudices of His day—that He shared in the notions of the Jews: does it believe that He is God? 3. Any way He has committed Himself to the simple utterances of the word, 3. But if, as they say, the Lord Jesus was not above the possibility of being affected by the passing opinions of the day when on earth, what have they to say of Him as risen from the dead? 4. For His utterances are from the same written word of God, 5. Moses, Psalms, Prophets—He stamps all with His own divine authority, 5; and that at a time when, if ever, Scripture must have suffered from transmission, 5; for if multiplication of translation is a fruitful inlet to man's infirmity, yet the means of comparison afforded, acts in the contrary direction, 5. Satan never ventured the plea that men of to-day have suggested, 6. Review of the suitability of Scripture to meet God's glory and man's wants, 7. Man not created in his present condition—made upright but since fallen through self-exalting rebellion—misery the result—communion with God lost, 7. God's word tells us this, 7. God's word was spoken before it was written, 7. God's word established a link with His fallen creatures sufficient for faith to receive, if not yet to

rest in, 8. At that time the circumstances proving divine goodness were unlike what they are now, 8; the length of man's life on the earth was enormous, 8, only short of that period which will characterise the reign of the Second Man, 9. But when man's age was shortened, God committed His word to writing—to a people, and not as before to individuals, 9. This as a whole was called the law, while the book of Job testifies of what God is to a Gentile, 9. It is remarkable how the Jew, ignorant of the treasure, becomes the channel of its transmission; not knowing God's purpose which all Satan's efforts only serve to consummate, 10. This century questions the writings of Moses! 10. Of which the Lord bore testimony that, if *they* were rejected, it were vain to present *His* words! 11. Men talk about the "obscurity of Scripture," 11. *They* produce obscurity when they are not clear, but God sees things as they really are, 11, and conveys truth in the best way suited to man, 12, by the variety of His instruments, while yet it is the word of God, 12. There are those who would apply the term "word of God" exclusively to Jesus; but both He and Scripture are so called, 12. And the reason is of the deepest import, 12. *Jesus is THE TRUTH*—Scripture never says that God or that the Father is the truth, for the truth means the expression of what a person or thing *is*, and the personal Word the Son alone objectively declares the Father, 13. Rationalists employ the expression that God is the truth, and shrink from the declaration of Scripture that Christ is the truth, because they assume the ability to know God directly and immediately themselves, instinctively excluding a mediator, 13. But a merely relative being cannot know the absolute, 14. We have the absolute and the relative in Christ Jesus, 15. But the knowledge of this is not enough for man. He needs a new nature, 15. And the Spirit brings the truth in grace into the heart of man, 16. Man's *will* hinders his understanding the word of God. It does not suit him to be told truth plainly, 16. On the other hand, honest doubt is better than traditional faith, 16. Faith easily got is easily parted with, 17. The word makes nothing of man as he is, but lays bare all his faults, 17. There is nothing man likes so little as his own exposure, nothing he will fight more keenly for, than to show he is not in the wrong, 17. Thus the word prostrates the first man and exalts the Second, 18. Every part of Scripture has a moral end—even a genealogy in Matthew has a purpose—beginning with David and Abraham, which would have been utterly unsuitable in Luke, where man is traced up to Adam, 19. Neither Matthew nor Luke might have known the moral import of their several genealogies, but

God had His purpose, 19. A teacher cannot put a beauty into Scripture, he does but help you to see what is there already, 20. Scripture gives the church its authority, as well as furnishes materials for ministry, 20. The true idea of ministry is service, even in the gift of ruling, 20. Scripture not merely a source of truth, but it gives you pure truth without error on every subject on which it treats, 20, not teaching the language of any particular century, 20. Science changes its language, Scripture never. It is unchangeable as its author, 21. Scripture is the truth, not the church, or ministry, 21. Christ the true test; if I wish to know what God is, I learn it in Him. Or what man is, it is in Christ I discover it, 22. I never know the wickedness of man till I see it exercised towards Christ, 23. All truth is piecemeal except as I see it in relation to Christ, 23. In Him I learn what heaven is, and am not perplexed by the symbolical language of Scripture, 23. I learn too, how it is that the amiable, benevolent, and kindly may be cast into hell, while the lost and ruined go to heaven, 25. Note on J. S. Mill's criticism of Sir W. Hamilton, 25. Salvation is not a help merely—the Jew had that—but God providing a righteousness for man, and not claiming one of him, 26. This is a new kind of righteousness, justifying the unjust through faith of Jesus, 27. Greek philosophy was a falsehood, saying that man is the measure of all things, whereas Christ is, 28. It is a Person, not a book, we are brought to love, however we may value the book, 28. Faith in Jesus and love to His person go together, 28. It is in Him I know the future too, 29. God is not patching up an old creation, but bringing in a new one, 29. Rationalism measures truth by man's experience, wisdom, and power; whereas Christ is the measure of all things, and Christ is the truth, 29. Men may talk about fine poetry, wonderful biography, admirable maxims of prudence, profound morality to be found in Scripture; but to what use if one perishes, not having received the truth? 30. Christendom is guilty of a worse apostasy in rejecting Christ than was Judaism. Rationalism is one of the most powerful currents to this end, carrying before it all who trust in it, 30. The personal Word brought before us in the written word is the only safeguard—in a word, faith produced and nourished by the word of God, 30. Appendix: Mr. Mill's charge of defects in Christianity in his essay on Liberty, 32.

RATIONALISM.

1 COR. ii. 6-16.

It is not my business at this or any time to weaken the place of reason as given of God to man. It is an instrument fine, active, admirable, in its own sphere. Rationalism is the abuse of reason, by no means necessarily its result. Rationalism is reason intruding into the sphere of God and His revelation, so as in effect, if not openly, to deny both. It is this that I shall seek to combat, and this above all, not so much by exposing, as might be easily done, the folly of its course, and the danger of its issues, but as much as possible by the presentation of the truth. Now Rationalism does not pretend to the truth; on the contrary its constant aim is to render the acquisition of truth an uncertain thing. It would thus plunge man back again into that very darkness from which the revelation of God was given to bring him out.

The apostle, in the passage just now read, touches on the root of this snare for the spirit of man; and the same principle, it is needless to say, is found almost everywhere in Scripture. The very fact of there being a Bible is of itself the witness against man's self-assertion, for the Bible throughout assumes that it is the word of God,—not merely that there is an element of God in its

pages, which reason has to discover and separate from the human elements that surround it. It is not so that God teaches or intimates or allows in any part of His word.

Happily too we stand at such an epoch in the revelation of God to man that we can bring in what all but an open infidel must acknowledge to be a most decisive authority. I am not now alluding to the assumptions of men, whoever they may be. I allude to the holiest and humblest of those born of woman,—to One who was man as truly as ever there was one, but to One who counted it not robbery to be equal with God. The authority of the Lord Jesus Christ ought at least to be definitive; and He, the Lord, has spoken not once only, for whenever He employs the word of God at all He makes it the ultimate authority from which there is no appeal. He guards it so fully as to exclude the notion that there might be that in the word of God which betrayed the infirmity of the earthen vessels His grace employed. Though man wrote, it is never styled the word of man, but God's word: yet He used human instruments; but these, the instruments, were so inspired of God as to display and to preserve their own distinctive features, whilst they perfectly furnished God's truth and only this. Such was in part the wisdom of God in inspiration. It did not set aside man, but it brought in God, and this with invariable perfectness: to bring Him in partially would have been to introduce the old element of difficulty and uncertainty.

That such is the fact cannot be denied by any soul that receives the words of the Lord Jesus as they are

given by His disciples ; and it is quite certain that He always speaks as one who gives us the words of God, and that He promised His followers the power of the Holy Ghost in order that they should communicate the word of God, one of these chief followers, no doubt ignorant of Jesus in the days of His flesh, nevertheless as to labours not only in word but in deed not a whit behind the chiefest, being the great apostle Paul. (John iii. 34, vii. 16, xiv. 26 ; 1 Cor. ii. 13 ; 2 Tim. iii. ; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.)

Let us for a moment consider the gravity of this fact. I cannot allow you to take the ground of owning how good, how lowly, how perfect was Jesus, and then to cavil at His words. I know that Rationalism does so. May I be permitted to say that it exposes its folly in so doing ? There is nothing more offensive than to talk in a patronizing way of the Lord Jesus,—to own the unsullied integrity of the Saviour, and at the same time to deny the inevitable conclusion which follows from His words and from His ways. I am aware that it is the fashion of some to insinuate that the Lord Jesus was not above the prejudices of His day—that He shared in the notions of the Jews. Can those who say so believe that He was and is God ? Has God prejudices ? Does He not move above the thoughts of the day of man on the earth ? Now the Lord Jesus has committed Himself throughout the whole course of His ministry to the most simple, distinct, reiterated utterances on a subject which yields to no other in vital moment,—which concerns you,—which concerns each child of man,—which does not concern the believer only but the unbeliever,—for which every soul must give

account to God. Impossible therefore to find anything that touches one more practically, more immediately, or more solemnly.

All through we have the Lord Jesus, first in a general way, next also in the smallest detail, in joy, in sorrow, in what concerned others, in what concerned Himself, in life, in death itself, at all times and under all circumstances, showing us His estimate—God's estimate—of the Scripture, the written word of God. And this came out in a remarkable way, and at a time when even those who freely handle Scripture, and in anything but a becoming spirit, must acknowledge it to be decisive; for there are those who would insinuate that our Lord Jesus "in the days of His flesh" was not above the possibility of being affected by the passing opinions of the age.

But will they say so of Him risen from the dead? Is it come to this, that resurrection itself does not deliver—nay, not even Jesus—from that which belongs to a world where sense and the workings of mind, and tradition may no doubt cast their chequering influences on man's mind and expression? I again ask, Is it so in the resurrection state for any? Assuredly we have the Lord risen from the dead; we have His words; we have one of the sweetest and most deeply interesting scenes of converse between the Lord and those who loved Him, when tried immensely by His death. Why? They understood not the Scriptures. And the Lord meets them where they were. What is the weapon that He uses? He, if any one, might surely have spoken out of His own unfathomable depths of mind,—might have opened those rich and mighty streams of divine truth

that could and would have burst from His heart to roll away the difficulties of those that clung to Him, cast down by the very cross wherein He was accomplishing their redemption. But no, our Lord takes up the Scriptures—the plain written word of God.

He begins with Moses; He quotes the Psalms; He points to the prophets—the well known threefold division of the Old Testament. I refer to this, because it proves in the most decisive way that the difficulties of speculation, on which so many have stranded are in fact their prejudices—that they are the passing clouds of this day, not the truth of God. It is false, yea blasphemous, that the Lord, the eternal Creator, yielded to the prejudices of *His* day, but true that the men who thus object are carried away by the irreverent thoughts of *their* day. He does indeed stamp with His own divine authority the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. He gives it to us just as it was then known among the Jews.

Undoubtedly too the Jews had passed through deep trials and great changes at that time. Then, if ever, the Old Testament Scriptures must have suffered somewhat from transmission. Impossible, save by the most immediate care of God, that the transcription of the Hebrew Scriptures should have quite escaped damage during such a fearful crisis as Israel had experienced. Up to this date, you must remember, they had been as a whole translated into but one language besides the original Hebrew. For although obviously the diffusion of God's word into a number of different tongues may act in each to admit of the mixture of man's infirmity in the translation, nevertheless the comparison of these

different tongues tells just in a contrary way. The result is that, where these various versions made at different times by so many distinct parties agree, his must be a singularly constituted mind which can get rid of the force derived from such united testimony. Now, at this very time, when our Lord employed Moses and the Psalms and the prophets as witnesses, there was not nor could be that wide-spread testimony which is derived from the Scriptures being diffused all over the world; it was after much had occurred calculated to ruffle the surface of the word of God, but before there was the counteracting power of one translation checking another in detail, yet in the mass conspiring to guard the revealed truth of God.

Neither is this subject to be considered simply in a broad point of view, but in practical application. For example, take our Lord in either His ordinary ways or the most extraordinary passages of His life. It is always the same weapon He uses. Regarded with Satan, in the scene of the temptation in the wilderness, the word of God is the one means of repelling him; and even Satan did not venture at that day on the expedient of the present—the insinuation that the divine authority of the Scripture is compromised by errors in copying, by the difficulties of preserving it intact, or the like. There was a plain issue between the enemy and the Saviour; but all depended on obedience, on meeting him by constant faith in the word of God. Then again, in the course of His ministry as of His daily walk, the continual reference is to the Scripture as the arbiter of every doubt or controversy that could be raised—the true, the

divine, and the only solution of every enigma in this dark world.

I have referred to these applications of a practical kind, in the first instance, but we may take the general principle into consideration for a few moments, in order to show how admirably revelation meets the wants of man and the glory of God.

God did not make man in the condition in which he is now; He did not throw the world into its moral confusion, not to speak of its physical misery. He that can conceive a divine being to have made man as he is, and the world as it is, must have the notion of a demon, an Ahriman, instead of the true God. That infinite power should create man to be the victim of such sorrow, to have his heart distracted with varied, intense, and ceaseless misery—to have, according to the word of God itself, evil inbred in his very nature (a doctrine enforced by the facts of every day), he that could conceive God to have so made man in such a world has the least worthy notion of God that even Rationalism could conceive. The word of God alone supplies the key, and explains this otherwise inscrutable riddle. According to that word He made man upright; the world and every creature in it He formed good; but man departed from God, and lost Him morally. No wonder, if foundations are out of course—God left and man fallen through self-exalting rebellion, that there should be misery; for the only possible spring of happiness is in the communion of God with His creatures. Sin necessarily destroys it; and man having lost Him becomes a prey to all the evil that the enemy of God can bring into the world, more deeply and if possible

irreparably, to sever man from God. This is the account of the Scriptures, and there is none other that can compete with it or explain all, so as either to justify God or to clear up the state of man. To make God Himself the author of man's moral evil is heinous wickedness, and man's conscience knows it, even when he might wish it to excuse himself. Here then at the outset the immense and singular value of God's word comes in; and upon this too a remark of general import may be seasonable.

I say "God's word,"—not at first "Scripture," but God's *word*; for His word was spoken before it was written. Then as ever the word of God became the sole link with God of man departed from Him. Sin had broken the relationship between the Creator and the creature. The word of God meets man even so through the revelation of another; for man had no sooner fallen into sin than God appeared upon the scene, and pledged, not Himself as such, but in the most tender way the Seed of the woman as the conqueror of him that had brought in the evil—the bruiser of the serpent's head. That word of God became the resource, if not yet the resting-place, of faith. It might have other words added in due time; but that first pledge of grace was enough for faith to receive, and find in it the spring of a new nature by looking to the Seed of the woman—the Lord Jesus Christ. The word of God is revealed before there can and in order that there may be a blessing for man—a blessing for man fallen from God.

At that time the circumstances wherewith to prove divine wisdom and goodness were unlike what we know as our own. The length of man's life on the earth was

enormous. It did not reach, it is true, that space to which man is yet destined even on earth. Man will never arrive at his proper and full measure here below, till the Second Man comes to take the world under His government. Complete blessing for man in the world is reserved for the woman's Seed—for Jesus. Still, the life of man was only short of the due period of its ultimate display (though even then dissolution may not be). It never reached a thousand years,—all but a thousand years, we may say in general terms, but never so much. This will be the common term for man ere long; but it is reserved not for his witty inventions—for no panacea that he will discover; it will be the honour of God for Jesus, and for Him even with man here below. At that day we can well understand therefore how fitly the word of God was not yet committed to writing; but in due time, when man's age was shortened, and it was no longer individuals with whom God had suited dealings in grace, but when a people was called out, we see the perfect wisdom of God in then committing His word to writing.

This as a whole was called the law, contained in its great foundation in the Old Testament,—of course generally, but more particularly in the five books of Moses—not without a most remarkable companion, the book of Job, the witness of what God is to a man, to one outside, and not merely to a Jew. And, wonderful to say, the Jew, ignorant of this priceless and peculiar treasure, is nevertheless the very channel to which we are indebted for its transmission to us. He does not see that his narrowness is rebuked by it; he does not perceive how God's mercy to the stranger is assumed

and indeed asserted in it; he does not conclude that He who was the God of Israel is the God who had compassion for man in his need and wretchedness, the sport of Satan's power, but always under the mighty hand of God, who accomplishes His own sifting and gracious purpose—a purpose decided on before Satan tempts—a purpose which Satan only consummates in attempting to hinder, corrupt, and destroy.

Moses is followed by a multitude of other testimonies in due time. It is of this collection of writings called the Scripture that our Lord speaks, and it was from this that He borrowed from time to time as occasion called for it. But, when or for whatsoever end cited, even He constantly used it as decisive authority. Thus we have the principle laid down in the question with the Jew which the fifth chapter of John's gospel presents to us. There Christ justifies the judgment which is coming by the weight and variety of the evidence addressed to their conscience. There was first the Baptist whom the Jews acknowledged for a prophet. There was next a greater witness in the works that Jesus did—His miracles—never before approached in magnitude or in character; for the works of Jesus had a speciality in their import, and not merely in their grandeur. Then again the Father Himself bore witness of Jesus up to that time. But the Lord reserves for the last place, and therefore the greatest of all morally—what? His words? Nay, but the writings—of whom? Of the very man who, if this century is to be listened to, has written none of these books called by his name—at most but scanty legends made up many centuries after into that which is styled the law of Moses. Not such

is the language of the Lord of glory. HE has commended, used, and reasoned on the books of Moses as in point of authority possessed of a character superior to any words that could be spoken. This is a point of capital importance. He censures the Jews for slighting rather than believing Moses, and decides that, if they did not believe the writings of Moses, it was in vain to expect their believing His words. This does not at all imply that the writings of Moses in themselves were more simply, or thoroughly, or characteristically divine than the words of Jesus : God forbid such a thought ! But it is Jesus Himself who sets the writings of Moses, as a medium of authority, in a place which no spoken words could have. Who can deny that this is the doctrine of John v. ? Can any man bring any other conclusion in fairness from it ?

The words are plain : and here is another point to which I may address myself for a moment. Men talk about the "obscurity" of Scripture. It is not for me to doubt that Scripture must be profound ; it cannot be that that which is the revelation of God should not be incomparably above man. But is it therefore obscure ? Certainly not in the sense of that vague and dark uncertainty from which men suffer who are conscious of their own weakness. I can understand a person with a dense cloud of words, just because he has little matter. I can understand one that, perhaps without even intending it, thus involves himself, just because his thought is anything but clear ; but the reverse is true as to Scripture. Not only did God see all things as they really are, but He would convey the truth (for this was the object of revelation) in the manner most

suited to man, and nevertheless by the instruments whom it best suited His glory to use at one time, whether in the Old Testament or in the New. This He has done. He has not in any way shut out the style, the manner, the heart, the character of each man inspired to write. All these things are impressed upon the Scriptures. Particular authors have their own way and tone. This is one of the great beauties of revelation—the vast variety of those that were employed. But then the main distinguishing feature which Rationalism denies is, that it is the word of God—the chosen, the appropriate, the specific name of Scripture.

On the other hand I grant you that there are those who would apply the term “Word of God” exclusively to Jesus. It is true that Jesus is the Word of God. Thus the link between Jesus and the Scripture is immensely close and characteristic. I make this remark because, as is so often found, these oppositions will be proved to have a link which reconciles them. It is true on its own warrant that Scripture is called the word of God; it is true that Jesus is called the Word of God; but it is true that Scripture is the word of God emphatically, because God has continually before Him Jesus as the object of that written word. He is the personal Word of God from all eternity; Scripture is the written word of God in time, but then having its link of connection in this—that the thread, so to speak, which unites all Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, is the reference of the Holy Ghost directly or indirectly to Jesus Christ the Lord.

Now why is this? For a reason of the deepest import; and, as being of a general character, we may

glance at it for a moment. *Jesus is THE TRUTH.* The truth is to be found nowhere else. You may find other things, but *the truth* is in Him, and severed from Him it is nowhere else. It is remarkable that Scripture never calls the Father the truth, nor ever uses an expression of which Rationalism is exceedingly fond.—that God is the truth. I grant that not a few divines say so too. They are not aware that they are rationalizing when they thus speak. No doubt they mean nothing wrong; but very surely they *are* wrong. Scripture is right, and nothing but Scripture is divinely authoritative. How comes it then that Scripture calls Jesus the truth? and why is it that neither God nor the Father is ever said to be the truth? The reason is this: God could not be said to be the truth because “the truth” means the expression of what a person or thing is—the revelation of what it really is. The statement which reveals another fully and truly is the truth. Consequently God, being the self-subsisting One who alone can say I AM, has been pleased to reveal Himself, not in the written word only, but in and by One who is God and became man, and thus alone could be the expression of Himself to man. The truth means the *expression* of what God is, not merely the being of God. Hence the blessedness of revelation by the personal Word, the Son who when none saw God at any time declared Him the Father. Christ is called therefore in Scripture “the image of the invisible God.”

Do you know why it is that rationalists lean to and employ the expression that God is the truth, while they shrink back from the declaration of Scripture that Christ is the truth? Because they assume the ability

to know God directly and immediately themselves,—because they instinctively if not formally exclude a mediator. The system maintains that man is competent to search out God without another, without a revelation, without a personal expression of Him. Such is its fatal vice. It may not be carried out to the same extent in all: piety, reverence, tradition may arrest its full conclusions. But if Rationalism be regarded in its principle, and consistently carried out to its last logical results, there is the absolute exclusion of the truth as revealed in the person of Christ. It is the assertion either of man's ability to know God without any means except his own mind, or it sinks into sheer despair. Thus when carried out it always tends either towards the Pantheistic idea of man being a part of God, or to the atheism that denies the God he cannot thus know. Such is the philosophy of the day in various forms.

But the truth cuts up the principle by the roots. Christ is the only One who objectively presents the truth—that truth which was revealed in the words of Scripture; for here was just the difficulty. The creature, as such, cannot of himself know God. It is impossible for one that has merely a relative being to know the absolute. There is necessarily an infinite distance between God the Creator as such and the creature as such; still more, when the opposition of sin enters the account, and makes it not merely a difference in nature, but a moral gulf which separates. And how then is this immeasurable gap between God and the creature, severed withal by sin, to be met? How is the vast distance to be filled up? By One who can come down from God to man,—by One who, deign-

ing to humble Himself in love, does not merely bring Godhead into contact with humanity, but comes down to be a man in the midst of men. In this is seen what orthodoxy most justly insists on (and it cannot be too much insisted on),—the grand fundamental truth which lies at the bottom of all truth from God and of all hope for man,—that the same blessed person is as truly God as man, as truly man as God. For on one side we have One who is in Himself absolute (He is God); on the other side none the less does He come down into relationship with man (He is man);—One who, if He were not man, could not make God known to man, but One who, if He had only remained God, could not have bridged the space between God and man. But becoming man without ceasing to be God, and uniting God and man in the same person, He is just the one to give us the truth as it could not be otherwise known. The Father remains in His own unapproachable Godhead; He does not become relative. It is the Son, the man Christ Jesus, who becomes the Mediator between God and man.

But then this is not the only want of man; because the heart of man still rebels, and no matter what the love, the goodness, and the truth which God reveals in Christ, no matter what the need, the misery, the sense of guilt in man; neither the grace that is on the one side, nor the abject evil and wretchedness on the other, of themselves can bring men to God;—in truth, if this were all, they fail to overcome the resistance that the carnal mind makes to God. And how then is this difficulty vanquished? By another great fact in the divine nature, clearly set forth in the word of God. Not only is there One who

is the truth objectively, even Jesus, but there is One who has the power of bringing the truth in grace into the heart of man, in virtue of God's counsels, and of Christ's redemption, communicating a wholly new nature. Who, what, is He? The Spirit. Hence it is said in 1 John v. 6, that the Spirit is the truth. It is said of the Holy Ghost no less than of the Son—of the Son because He brings the truth in His own person; of the Spirit because He makes that truth my own. The Spirit is the immediate link by bringing the written word and mixing it with faith in those who hear it. Such is the way in which God settles the matter, and there is nothing that shows divine wisdom and grace in a manner more blessedly distinct. Let me ask too, who can complain of lack of clearness even when we listen to the most abstract truth? It would be hard to find any communications made with greater simplicity throughout the compass of the revealed word of God. Yet here we are touching on the highest truth—the very nature of God Himself; here we are touching on the deepest wants of man: nevertheless what can be plainer?

It is well to state another fact. The reason why the word of God is not understood by man is not from any obscurity in the word, but from the *will*—the alienated condition of man's own nature as departed from God. The truth is that the word of God is too plain for him. There is the real fault, if man only realized what the true difficulty is,—and you will find it true continually. I grant you this: there are cases where an honest doubt exhibits more working of conscience than a mere traditional faith. A man who merely accepts

things generally received because they are so believes man, not God, and under pressure will give all up. He got what he calls his faith easily, and the day hastens when he will part with it easily: it has never sunk down—never been planted of God in his soul. When you are in earnest about a thing, you do not so readily believe what is said. If you don't care the least about it, you may believe anything, and you may deny anything. Easy going and otiose faith is mere indifference.

A person tells you a story: well, you feel no particular interest in it, and you answer, "I suppose so;" you are not in a position to confront the informant with a counterproof, even if it seem suspicious. You let it pass. It may be so. What does this prove? Simply that your heart is not concerned in the matter. But a person tells you that a large fortune was left you a month ago in France, and at once you turn round. Why so? Because you are interested in the thing. You say, No, you cannot believe it is so; you have no relatives there; and you demand full proof. In this you are interested, though the effect of the interest is that you seem obliged to doubt the tale. You would like it to be true, but still you have serious difficulties. It is just so when persons are interested in the testimony of the word of God. Indeed it is so when the Spirit of God has so far met the heart's indisposition to receive the blessing of God that it really desires what scripture says to be true. Then men enquire, believe with the heart, and are saved.

But the real ground why man fights against the word of God is because it slights and judges man as he is, laying bare all his faults. There is nothing

that man likes so little as his own exposure; there is nothing he will fight more keenly for than to show he is not in the wrong. I grant you that when a man is abandoned to all that is evil,—when utterly unjust, he knows not even shame, and may allow anything to be said without feeling about it; but I am now supposing men in their ordinary state, when the last thing a man will honestly allow is that he is quite wrong.

As a whole Scripture necessarily directs itself to this,—yea, the word of God before it was written,—for there never was a word of God bearing on man's estate, since the fall, without that effect. There was a word given of old meant to be the rule of conduct in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; they might eat anything else; but this was forbidden. They eat, and fell; but there never was any word revealed to be the resting-place of faith except what prostrates the first man and exalts the Second, thus laying bare man as he is fallen from God, but bringing in the Second Man, the Lord Jesus, as the only deliverer.

This then is the great difficulty for man in Scripture. Every part of it tends to a moral end. It is not merely a book that contains truth, but it has this moral character, dealing with the nature of man, and letting in the will of God. All Scripture speaks thus. There is not a single portion of Scripture which has not moral elements in it. If God were only giving a genealogy, He does not separate the truth even from what looks to be a list of dry names. Take, for instance, the first chapter of Matthew. You know, I dare say, that rationalists will have it that Matthew could not even count fourteen

right; and as for Scripture facts, according to their sage conclusion, the apostolic writer did not know as much as a Sunday scholar. So much for the discernment and wisdom of men. Do you think they believe it? Perhaps so; I will not dispute that matter; but at any rate, whether they are satisfied with their own statements or not, I must affirm that this chapter—and I am speaking now of its list of names, which is the driest part of it, as men would say—bears the stamp of God upon it as truly, though not so evidently, as John xvii. It is clothed with a deep divine purpose in every particular. Who but God would have thought if it were only of his beginning with David and Abraham, and bringing these two capital points together from the very first? Why not trace up to Adam, like Luke? No; David and Abraham alone were right in Matthew. If Luke had either begun with Abraham and David or ended with them, there would have been no such perfection in the Spirit's design by him as there is now.

For what am I using these facts? To show that all Scripture is instinct with a purpose of the deepest wisdom, and moral power, and divine grace. Whose purpose was it? Am I contending that Matthew knew all this? Perhaps he did not. It is nothing at all to our present question whether he did or did not. The great thing for you and for me is this, that it was *God's* purpose,—that it was a wisdom above Matthew's; and yet it is such that, though extant from the first in the word of God, how many of us have passed it over, how few have even noticed it! Why? Because we so little enter into His hidden wisdom. But there it is; and it is just the fact as to Scripture, that not the most

enlightened teacher or glowing preacher who ever spoke put a single beauty into it ; he only helps you to see the beauty that is there. This serves to show by the way that true ministry is in no way weakened by the assertion of the divine authority of Scripture. Neither again is the authority of the church weakened by it.

On the contrary, it is Scripture which gives the church authority ; as it is Scripture which furnishes the great store of materials for ministry. At the same time here is the essential difference : ministry is not an ultimate authority in itself. In fact it is not properly authority : the idea of ministry is serving, even if it were the exercise of the gift of rule. For I grant that there are among those that minister such as rule. My advice to those that rule, if I may be allowed to offer any, is to do that work with firmness, however lowly, as much as anything else. Rule is no less divine a gift for ministry than preaching and teaching. It is well, no doubt, to take care that they are rulers of the Lord's giving before they enter on that grave task. But, however this may be, what I want to show is, that Scripture, so far from interfering with or weakening whatever is good and of God, not only furnishes the finest and most abundant material for the use of those who are serving the Lord, but has another use yet more distinctive—indeed unique. Scripture is not merely a source of truth, an infinitely richer source than all other mines of spiritual lore in the world put together, but it gives you pure truth without error on every subject of which it treats. Not that it talks the science of the nineteenth century : and there is just the wisdom of God. Neither does it talk the science of the first century, or of any

other. It stands alone with a wholly different origin, nature, character, and aim. Confessedly the language of science has often changed; it has often had to mend, just because it is imperfect, as it is human. But there is the word of God, which, while it condescends to the humblest, never changes for the highest. It is the expression of the unchangeable One; it is the permanent communication of truth, and for all souls, places, and times. There is nothing similar nor even second to it.

But I wish also to show that, while the church, as already referred to, is not and could not be the truth, any more than ministry, Scripture is the truth, as being not only its best source, but its only standard. Such is the blessedness of the Scripture God has given. It is the standard by which we can test every statement that is made by man. There, above all, it writes its own divine character. The written word is the truth even as Christ is. If Christ were not the truth, scripture would not be so in the same way in which it is. Christ personally—the written word as the standard of truth—is the test for everything that can be said or written now, in the hands of all that fear the Lord, whether it be those that minister or those that are ministered to. What an invaluable prize to have the perfect standard of truth, and not only a means of knowledge! This means we may have from one another. A man, woman, child, a tract even, it has been remarked, might be the medium of communicating the truth; but none of these is the standard: only the word of God is. Scripture has this character, and this because throughout Christ is its constant object, directly or indirectly,—Christ who is the truth.

Thus it does not matter what you are looking at, test it at once by Christ. Supposing, for instance, I want to know who and what God is,—how is it to be learned? I might search out and weigh all the works that point to a divine mind and hand; but where is the man to gather thence a full, clear, adequate conception of what God is? I answer, look at Christ. What Christ said was the word of God; what Christ showed was the way of God; what Christ wrought was the work of God. I cannot know God Himself except so far as I behold Him in Christ. As the Lord Himself said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” It was not that the Son was in any personal sense the Father, but assuredly He was the only one competent to reveal the Father. No angel would suffice. An angel could only show me a creature. A divine person, the Son, the image of the invisible God,—He lets me know what God is.

Again, supposing I make a totally different inquiry—one which might seem so opposed as to be incompatible with the display of what God is in the same person of Christ—I want to get a true conception of man: where am I to look for it? At you, or myself, or any other? No; I grant you that we are men. But oh! it were sorrowful to think that there was no brighter ideal of humanity, sorrowful to think there had never been any exemplar better than ourselves. But there was, there is. Where? Adam? No; he was man, the first man, it is true; but what I see in Adam is a man that fell, a man that gave up God for an apple. Ah! it is a poor picture of man. I see God acting there for the trial of man's responsibility; but there is nothing that gives

me the true elevation of man in Adam. Let me look at Christ. Ah! there is man. There I find that which my heart loves; there is that which gives me the true nobility and perfection of man; there I can rest.

We might go through all other objects; for it does not matter what is chosen. Thus, suppose I want to know the wickedness of man—surely we cannot find this in Christ! No; but I must bring in Christ none the less to find its full manifestation in others. Looking at man at any time, no doubt we find evil in abundance. I see man wicked when he fell in Paradise, and no less wicked when he killed his brother outside it; I see man in all corruption and violence till the Lord swept him away; I see man setting up demons and idols before the law, and I see him basely rebellious under the law; but where shall I find man as he is, where at his worst? Not till I see perfect goodness come into the world in the person of Christ. It is always Christ who is the test of every object. He is the truth. Never do we get the truth of anything until we compare it with Christ; and, on the other hand, if we honestly apply Christ, there we have the truth as it never can be found otherwise. All else is but piecemeal. A partial view of man is given at this time, and a partial view at that; but bring in Christ and then man appears as he really is. Christ goes not merely among poor men, but among the rich; not only before the profane, but before religious people,—Pharisees, Sadducees, Pilate, Herod, or anybody. Thus every soul is put to the test, for Christ is the truth, and Christ only.

Just in the same way must I seek, supposing I want to gain a just idea of what heaven will be. What

then is it? A place of gold and precious stones? Nothing of the sort. I know that these are employed as figures of the Bride or the glorified church in the Apocalypse; but it is to me certain that a man who has merely this as his conception of heaven is more a Mahometan than a Christian. All believers ought to know very well that such is not the meaning of the word of God; and God Himself, therefore, gives us divine landmarks that we may not be ignorant when He is using Scripture figuratively, and when He is using it symbolically. There is no such difficulty as unbelief affects to find. Men do the same thing in principle almost every day, as we meet with in the language of Scripture. Supposing you tell me that you "flew" down the street, we do not suppose that you borrowed wings, yet we know very well what you mean; you are only using a very intelligible and expressive figure. Supposing you tell me that another "crept" down the street, are we to suppose that he went on all fours? Thus, no matter what the figure that is used, there are landmarks by which one may learn whether the thing is intended in its literal import, or whether it is a strikingly figurative method of stating what is meant. This makes no difficulty at all. It is only uncommonly stupid or uncommonly wilful people who are stumbled by such expressions. If the Bible be accepted as God's word, He must look for docility, not wilfulness, in those who profess to believe in Him; but He takes account of everybody—the poorest and the lowest; and there is nothing that delights one more in Scripture than the manner in which God has respect even to the child or the feeblest soul imaginable. And

Christ is the One who brings it all out. Thus I know what heaven is, because it is the place where God is displaying His own excellence by crowning the man that was rejected from and by the world. It is the place where Christ is glorified, where He is accepted in love, light, and glory, where God Himself puts honour on His Son.

But further, as we learn from Christ what are the elements of heaven, by the very same application of Him, one may know why and how it is that the simplest soul who receives the gospel will be in the nearest circle round the Son of God in the heavens. And another thing is discovered which otherwise might perplex some—how it is that the amiable, the moral, the benevolent, might nevertheless be lost, instead of going to heaven. How many do not understand this!*

* I am certainly not disposed to defend the system laid down by Sir W. Hamilton and defended by the present Dean of St. Paul's, believing that they have laid themselves open to the not unsuccessful attacks even of men hostile to revealed truth. Yet who that fears God can but shudder at the language of their critic, bolder than man should be in talking of God as set forth in the very imperfect words of those he censures? "If (says Mr. J. S. Mill, in his *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy*, 2nd edition, pp. 102, 103) instead of the 'glad tidings,' that there exists a being in whom all the excellences which the highest human mind can conceive, exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a being whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, nor what are the principles of his government, except that 'the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving' does not sanction them: convince me of it, and I will bear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this, and at the same time call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say in plain terms that I will not. Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do: he shall not

Is not God just? Certainly. How then is it that God should cast into hell a conscientious, benevolent, and kindly person, amiable, refined, all that is delightful in human society? For this simple reason: the test of every soul is Christ; and if the most correct, the most elegant, the most intelligent in every other pursuit, were to turn all those qualities, and make them the reason, as is constantly done, for rejecting Jesus and refusing to be saved as poor sinners, I affirm it to be most righteous with God to condemn them. For they despise His grace.

I press this truth on every soul here: salvation flows from grace; salvation is for the lost; salvation is for those that want it. It is not help merely; salvation is far more than help. When God owned the Jews as His people, He gave them helps, ordinances, priesthood, every moral test, and ritual aid. What was the result? The crucifixion of His Son Jesus Christ. The use of every help in the hands of weak and guilty man ends in the rejection of the Lord of glory; and when man has done his very worst, God, if I may so say, does His very best; for blessed as it was to give Jesus, to send Him on an errand of love into the world, it was still more blessed to give Him to die for His enemies, and to

compel me to worship him. I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go." Now it is plain that the principle on which Mr. M., like all other unbelievers, goes, is that of judging the word which will judge him at the last day, when the lost, no less than the saved, when those under the earth, as well as all on it and above it, shall bow every knee, and with every mouth confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Mr. M. *must* bow: may it not be in perdition!

turn that death which was their worst sin into the only door, not of hope only, but of salvation for the poorest of sinners. This is what He has done. This is the truth; and there if not purblind we may see the highest kind of justice too—God's justice now revealed in the gospel. For it is no longer a question of claiming righteousness from man, as the law did, but on God's part of revealing it; and this is the precise meaning of the expression that we have all read in Romans i. iii. x., to which I would briefly draw your attention, so that you may learn it from God himself in His own word for your soul,—“the righteousness of God.”

This is a new kind of righteousness—God's justifying justice, through the redemption that is in Christ our Lord, because of His blood and death. It is the justice of God, who now justifies the unjust by faith of Jesus; it is for lost ones who believe in Jesus, by whom God can afford to reconcile to Himself His enemies. And how? By Jesus Christ. It is *His* righteousness by Christ's work. This is the truth. Therefore, plainly, it does not matter what you look at, whether salvation or perdition, whether the ground of the rejection of the most moral or the reception of the most depraved, all finds its explanation in this—that God measures everything by Christ. If He is refused, all is lost; if He is accepted, all is changed—old things pass away, all things become new.

How different is God's standard from that of the philosophers, who said that man was the measure of all things! They could not have uttered a greater lie; for I use plain words about a very serious thing, and refuse pleasant compliments where the deepest

interests are at stake. I say that the grand standing maxim of the Greek philosophy was a falsehood. Not man but Christ is the measure of all things. He of whom we have been speaking—the Truth—alone truly measures all things. Accordingly this is just the reason why I press it so strongly this day. The word of God is the written form of it—the fully-expressed manner of giving it to us in Scripture. But do you not see one that runs through all the book—a person that we can and do love above all?* I can understand valuing, prizing, honouring a book; but we can love a person as even a book cannot be loved. Hence it is that you cannot have real faith in Jesus without love to His person, as He is Himself the full expression of God's love, found nowhere else in perfection. For although there are manifestations of divine bounty and goodness everywhere around us, there is always a sad falling short, and how often moral perplexity and contradiction even for the thoughtful, in this world! There is, no doubt, a beautiful exuberance of life in the spring; but as surely as possible there is the extinction of its leaves and fruits before the winter closes. And so if there be the bloom of man's life, there is more palpably the inroad of decrepitude and death at last. Everything in this world is thus tarnished and spoiled; the reason of which is simply that man is departed from God. But then another Man is gone up to God, and is glorified straightway—not in heaven alone, but in God Himself. And there is the true place to behold man now—in Christ's person. It is not only that we see the true man now, the perfect image of what man is in Christ; but we

* See Appendix.

learn the God-given place of man in heaven at the right hand of God. And Christ is gone to prepare a place for us.

More than this; it is only by looking at Christ that I know the future according to God any more than the present place of the Christian. The nations are wearying themselves in the very fire for vanity, trying this expedient and that to improve the world. I do not wonder that statesmen have weary heads; I do not wonder that there is constant change and disappointment; for in point of fact it is only man trying to patch up a thing that cannot be mended. But then here is what God will do. With Him is no patching up, but the bringing in what He calls a new creation. This is what God has in hand. He does not mean alone to bring glory to Himself by taking men up to heaven to be with Christ there, and reign with Him, but also to bless men under Christ's reign on earth. And how does one know this? By bringing Christ into the consideration of man here below. God has promised Christ the earth, and all things; for He did not merely reconcile those that believed, but all things. Consequently it is there we see the triumph of the truth as against all the rationalizing of men. Rationalism merely allows of man's experience whereby to judge all else. According to it man cannot work miracles, and *therefore* there were none! man cannot prophesy, and *therefore* there could not be prophecy! Everything in this school is founded on man's little circle of power, knowledge, and experience; but man is far from being the measure of everything,—is, in fact, the measure of nothing. Christ is the measure of all things. Christ

is the truth, and that is what I have wished to press on you.

I desire not to protract this lecture beyond a reasonable length. I have tried to bring forward, as opposed to Rationalism, the great distinctive features of the truth in Christ. Men will say as to the word of God, that there is fine poetry in it, wonderful biography, admirable maxims of prudence such as are found nowhere else, and the most profound morality. All most true, but all in vain; for what is the good of grand poetry and true history and the soundest maxims of human life and the deepest insight into the heart, if after all one perishes, as assuredly they must who have not received the truth? Further, there are none who fall into such perdition as those who go out from the bosom of Christendom. It was bad enough for the Jews to reject Christ; but Christendom is guilty of a worse apostasy from far greater privileges and from the most certain truth. Depend upon it that Rationalism is one of the most powerful currents that is flowing on and carrying down in its stream all who trust it. The Lord deliver from that which can only lure to destruction—deliver from that system which exalts man and lowers the Christ whom it professes to honour, but really rejects as the Truth.

The Lord give all who hear faith to receive Jesus Christ the Son of God, and then to read the word of God as the divine expression of Jesus—the personal Word brought before us in the written word. This will be our safeguard, and we shall need all: it is the divinely given one, specially for the last days. It is not faithful ministers (although I am sure God will

have them as long as He is gathering the church from the earth); it is not the church (for itself requires to be secured, and therefore is not the security): the word of God is. It is not even the Spirit Himself, although there cannot be the power of the word without the Spirit: you cannot know the value of Christ the truth unless you have the Spirit the truth. Nevertheless the test of having the Spirit the truth, and of not being a prey to fanaticism, is that the soul is attracted and subject to the Lord Jesus, the Son of God; and this cannot be without faith produced and nourished by the word of God.

APPENDIX.

THE following extract from Mr. J. S. Mill on Liberty, chapter ii., will illustrate the utter blindness of the natural man where Christ is not seen and applied by faith as the embodiment of God's mind and will. Hence the absurdity of concluding that the ideal of Christian morality is negative rather than positive; that in its precepts 'thou shalt not' predominates unduly over 'thou shalt;' that a body of ethical doctrine is only possible by eking it out from the Old Testament (that St. Paul, hostile to this, assumes a pre-existing morality; namely, that of the Greeks and Romans); and that it is a great error to persist in attempting to find in the Christian doctrine that complete rule for our guidance which its author intended it to sanction and enforce, but only partially to provide. How solemn too to see that superstition and infidelity alike bring in law, heathen philosophy, and ecclesiastical development, because they both ignore Christ, who alone gives the written word its fulness of meaning and power of adaptation, as they both set aside practically and even in principle, though not in name, the free action of the Holy Spirit, in order to claim church authority on one side and human liberty on the other. Development is manifestly common to both; for Christ is not seen by either as the Second Man any more than as the last Adam. (1 Cor. xv.) The Christian knows Him as setting aside Adam and all the race included in that first man—knows Him as magnifying the law, but withal bringing in perfection which the law did in nothing. Thus He is not only the Second Man, but He is the *last* Adam. Perfection is in Him

only. Progress after Him is a lie; and no lie is of the truth, says St. John. Pretension to a fuller or higher morality is in part that spirit of antichrist which was to come; "and even now already is it in the world."

Mr. M. thus writes: "Before pronouncing what Christian morality is or is not, it would be desirable to decide what is meant by Christian morality. If it means the morality of the New Testament, I wonder that any one who derives his knowledge of this from the book itself can suppose that it was announced or intended as a complete doctrine of morals. The Gospel always refers to a pre-existing morality, and confines its precepts to the particulars in which that morality was to be corrected, or superseded by a wider and higher; expressing itself, moreover, in terms most general, often impossible to be interpreted literally, and possessing rather the impressiveness of poetry or eloquence than the precision of legislation. To extract from it a body of ethical doctrine has never been possible without eking it out from the Old Testament, that is, from a system elaborate indeed, but in many respects barbarous, and intended only for a barbarous people. St. Paul, a declared enemy to this Judaical mode of interpreting the doctrine and filling up the scheme of his Master, equally assumes a pre-existing morality; namely, that of the Greeks and Romans (!); and his advice to Christians is in a great measure a system of accommodation to that; even to the extent of giving an apparent sanction to slavery. What is called Christian, but should rather be termed theological morality, was not the work of Christ or the apostles, but is of much later origin, having been gradually built up by the Catholic church of the first five centuries, and though not implicitly adopted by moderns and Protestants, has been much less modified by them than might have been expected. For the most part indeed they have contented themselves with cutting off the additions which had

been made to it in the Middle Ages, each sect supplying the place by fresh additions, adapted to its own character and tendencies. That mankind owe a great debt to this morality, and to its early teachers, I should be the last person to deny; but I do not scruple to say of it that it is, in many important points, incomplete and one-sided, and that unless ideas and feelings, not sanctioned by it, had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse condition than they are. [This means, that to the free-thinker's mind mediæval Christendom has been better for man than the pure and simple Christianity of Christ and His apostles!] Christian morality (so called) has all the characters of a reaction; it is in great part a protest against Paganism. [Quite true; but how does this consist with Paul's assuming the pre-existing morality of the Greeks and Romans? This I should have thought to be in great part an adoption of Paganism, not a protest against it.] Its ideal is negative rather than positive; [Is not Christ its ideal? Is *He* negative rather than positive? or can blindness be more absolute?] passive rather than active; [What! He who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil? Undoubtedly He was also the Sufferer beyond all, but this seems a small matter to the man who feels not his ruin nor the need of redemption;] innocence rather than nobleness; abstinence from evil rather than energetic pursuit of good; in its precepts (as has been well said) 'thou shalt not' predominates unduly over 'thou shalt.' [It is clear that the allegation here is based on the traditions of a guilty judaizing Christendom, not on the teaching of Christ and the apostles, which is and is meant to be the exercise of a new spiritual nature in obedience, righteousness, and love, instead of the mere prohibitions of the law addressed to Israel.] In its horror of sensuality it made an idol of asceticism, which has been gradually com-

promised away into one of legality. It holds out the hope of heaven and the threat of hell as the appointed and appropriate motives to a virtuous life, in this falling far below the hope of the ancients, and doing what lies in it to give to human morality an essentially selfish character by disconnecting each man's feeling of duty from the interests of his fellow-creatures, except so far as a self-interested inducement is offered to him for *consulting them*. [The truth is that the gospel alone is right; for it deals with man as a sinner and lost, needing therefore to be saved: this done, it acts on him by the highest motives of known divine grace in Christ to obedience, righteousness, and love. In both its parts how incomparably beyond heathenism, which denies the depths of human need and the heights of God's favour! It does condescend to the real necessities of the sinner, but it lifts him out of his abject wretchedness into fellowship with the Father and the Son: if this be to meet selfishness, it assuredly is to slay it, and replace it with the enjoyment and active power of divine love.] It is essentially a doctrine of passive obedience; it inculcates submission to all authorities found established; who indeed are not to be actively obeyed when they command what religion forbids, but who are not to be resisted, far less rebelled against, for any amount of wrong in themselves. And while, in the morality of the best Pagan nations, duty to the State holds even a disproportionate place, infringing on the just liberty of the individual; in purely Christian ethics that grand department of duty is scarcely noticed or acknowledged. It is in the Koran, not the New Testament, that we read the maxim, 'A ruler who appoints any man to an office, when there is in his dominions another man better qualified for it, sins against God and against the State.' What little recognition there is of obligation of laws in modern morality is derived from Greek and Roman sources, not from Christian;

as even in the morality of private life, whatever exists of magnanimity, highmindedness, personal dignity, even the sense of honour, is derived from the purely human, not the religious part of our education, and never could have grown out of a standard of ethics in which the only worth, profess- edly recognised, is that of obedience. [This last is of God; the "purely human" is Satan's cheat for man far from Him. "My kingdom," answered Jesus to another free- thinker, "is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." Soon the kingdom of the world will be His. The Christian follows Him in both respects.]

"I am as far as any one from pretending that these defects are necessarily inherent in the Christian ethics, in every manner in which it can be conceived, or that the many requisites of a complete moral doctrine which it does not contain, do not admit of being reconciled with it. Far less would I insinuate this of the doctrines and precepts of Christ Himself. I believe that the sayings of Christ are all that I can see any evidence of their having been intended to be; that they are irreconcilable with nothing which a com- prehensive morality requires; that everything which is excellent in ethics may be brought within them, with no greater violence to their language than has been done to it by all who have attempted to deduce from them any practical system of conduct whatever. But it is quite consistent with this to believe that they contain, and were meant to contain, only a part of the truth, that many essential elements of the highest morality are among the things which are not pro- vided for, nor intended to be provided for, in the recorded deliverances of the founder of Christianity, and which have been entirely thrown aside in the system of ethics erected on the basis of those deliverances by the Christian church."

It is vain to speak patronisingly of Christ or Christianity. Either He was the Word (and the Word was God) made flesh, or an impostor. If He is God over all blessed for ever, though He became man to die for man in infinite love, it is folly to argue that His sayings, supplemented by the subsequent teaching of the Spirit, when the disciples could bear all the truth, leave any part either wanting or superfluous. Mr. M. utters only the presumptuous language of unbelief, for which he must surely give account. There is grace with God through that very Christ now: there will be judgment then. May he and my reader be wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus!

“And this being so, I think it a great error to persist in attempting to find in the Christian doctrine that complete rule for our guidance, which its author intended it to sanction and enforce, but only partially to provide. I believe, too, that this narrow theory is becoming a grave practical evil, detracting greatly from the moral training and instruction, which so many well-meaning persons are now at length exerting themselves to promote. I much fear that by attempting to form the mind and feelings on an exclusively religious type, and discarding those secular standards (as for want of a better name they may be called) which heretofore co-existed with, and supplemented the Christian ethics, receiving some of its spirit, and infusing into it some of theirs, there will result, and is even now resulting, a low, abject, servile type of character, [What! Mr. Mill: was CHRIST’S character “low, abject, servile”? This is the Christian’s “type of character;” and who can pretend that He derived His morality from Greek and Roman sources—that love, purity, lowliness, and devotedness, at cost of all to God’s will and glory which shone in their fulness in Jesus of Nazareth? But no; he that admires the morality of the “secular standards,” if he spoke out the truth of his mind

and heart, must own his hatred and contempt of Christ's life who came solely to do God's will,] which, submit itself as it may to what it deems the Supreme Will, is incapable of rising to, or sympathizing in, the conception of Supreme Goodness. [Was not Christ the ever obedient one? Was *He* incapable of rising to, or sympathizing in, the conception of Supreme Goodness? Are we *not* to walk as He walked?] I believe that other ethics than any which can be evolved from exclusively Christian sources must exist side by side with Christian ethics, to produce the moral regeneration of mankind; and that the Christian system is no exception to the rule, that in an imperfect state of the human mind the interests of truth require a diversity of opinions. [It is clear that a revelation of God, of His truth, is ignored and denied.] It is not necessary that in ceasing to ignore the moral truths not contained in Christianity [such as "honour" *i.e.* personal pride!] men do ignore any of those which it does contain. Such prejudices, or oversight, when it occurs, is altogether an evil; but it is one from which we cannot hope to be always exempt, and must be regarded as the price paid for an inestimable good. The exclusive pretensions made by a part of the truth to be the whole [which is inevitable to every man save the instructed Christian, who has learnt to use the fulness we have received in Christ] must and ought to be protested against; and if a reactionary impulse should make the protesters unjust in their turn, this onesidedness, like the other, may be lamented, but must be tolerated. If Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christians, they should themselves be just to infidelity. [This is precisely what the Apostle shows himself, and what every Christian can afford to be; for even the infidel is not without a conscience, and must own that which is amply sufficient to expose the sin and folly of his own infidelity.] It can do truth no service to blink the fact, known to all who have the

most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected, the Christian faith."

Thus lawlessly writes a man, who, not having seen and believed in the Son of God, has not life and is in darkness, hating the true God whom he knows not, and misrepresenting the Christian morality, which cannot be understood apart from Christ, who is its living model and the sole spring of conformity to it as now made known to the Christian by the Spirit in the power of His own resurrection. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, not to the mere works of innocence which befitted an unfallen Adam, nor to the legal position of a people in the flesh like Israel under Sinai, but unto *good works* [does this mean honestly "'thou shalt not' predominating unduly over 'thou shalt'"]? which God before prepared that we should walk in them. Undoubtedly in those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, the righteous demand (*δικαίωμα*) of the law is fulfilled, yet the result is produced by being under grace, and not under the law. For the law works wrath not love, and is the strength of sin, not of holiness. The law is lawful if one use it lawfully; and even Mr. M. ought to be aware of this, still more any one who truly names the name of the Lord, that the law is not made for a righteous man (and surely the Christian should be this and more), but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, &c. He ought to be aware that the apostle Paul affirms that this is according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, who will judge men ere long by Jesus Christ the Lord. If *He* will be "just to infidelity," where and how must the infidel be?

RITUALISM.

SYNOPSIS.

THE antagonism of Ritualism to Rationalism is only in appearance, 1. Persons having a true living knowledge of God may be carried away by Ritualism, but it proves nothing as to the system, 1. Under the seeming opposition of the two systems there is a link of connexion, 2. Rationalism is a deification of human powers, in which man presumes to judge the word of God, and is therefore the infidelity of the intellect, while Ritualism is the infidelity of the imagination, always tending to idolatry, 2. The remedy is not far off. The truth of the gospel is the best guard against Rationalism or Ritualism; he who understands this is safe from either, 3. The Spirit of God shows us the relation of the truths and facts of Christianity to what was really a ritual system, the only one that God ever acknowledged and which was seen in Israel, 3. If the revelation of God were confined to this, we ought all to be ritualists, 4. The truth of the gospel shows that the Lord Jesus came into the world to give us the truth which Rationalism, far from having found, confesses it is but in quest of, 4. Christ wrought a work the consequences of which exclude Ritualism, 4. Ritualism no more than Rationalism gives us truth. Ritualism furnishes shadows, Rationalism leaves men in darkness, 4. Rationalism is negative and deadly, gives nothing and would destroy all. The ritual system, according to God, did present a part of truth, but not even that in its fulness, 5. Everything with God is a reality; not so with the creature, for we cannot, properly speaking, call sin a reality, except for judgment, 5. There was once reality when God placed man in Paradise, 5; but now there is no reality here below, 5. Christ is the reality, and He has done a real work for God and man, 5. This it is which received into the heart by faith brings the sinner out of the lie in which fallen nature exists, and brings into the truth

and the grace of God, 6. The apostle has his soul filled with these truths, and brings them before those to whom he is writing, 6. As there is but one Christ, so but one sacrifice, 6. Frequent offering involves frequent suffering, according to the word and the foundation of Christianity, 7. In the Lord Jesus and His death are two grand truths: He came to bring God into the world; He came to put sin out of the world, 7. Rationalism is plainly ignorant of both; Ritualism may own the first, but in effect denies the second, 7. Far from controverting the incarnation, Ritualism makes much of it for its own ends, 7. It is impossible for Ritualism to live in presence of the truth that Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, 7. During God's maintenance of a ritual system, there was no such thing as a sacrifice that would put away sin before God, 8; but if I believe the truth of the gospel, sin *is* put away by Christ's death, 8. If He brought God nigh to the sinner during His life, in His death He brings the believer to God. If you really receive and act on this, you are *not* a ritualist, 9. You are brought nigh to God, not according to the measure of a Jew, or even of a Jewish priest, 9, but by a new and living way through the veil. Ritualism denies this; it renews and again insists on the veil, 10, which is treason—a plain denial of the revealed effect of the death of Christ, 10. Error is no less serious because a Christian holds it, 10. Ritualism then ignores the nearness to God into which the gospel brings the believer through Christ's work, 10. Scripture which treats of Christianity is uniform in demonstrating that Ritualism, though respecting Christ's person, virtually denies the efficacy of His work, 11. Ritualism has for one of its pillars the assumption that God has still an earthly priesthood, 11. Christian ministry and earthly priesthood are antagonistic, 11. The attempt to set up earthly priesthood is the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, 12. The Epistle of Jude proves it, 12. Men are to perish in the gainsaying of Korah, which infringes the glory of the Lord as Priest, 12. There is a priesthood under Christianity in another sense, but it only furnishes a further instance that Ritualism is irreconcilable with the Christian's place, 13. The power of Christianity is lost where its positiveness is forgotten, 13. The New Testament declares that all Christians are priests, 13. This is the only real priesthood which God now owns save Christ's on high, 13. If the Lord Jesus gives the type of Aaron and incomparably more, who are the sons of Aaron? 14. When we go to heaven, we shall not cease to be priests, 14. Judaism besides law gives us figures of the true; it is dead: and Ritualism only galvanizes the corpse, 15. Scripture affirms that it is idolatrous for Gentile

Christians to consecrate to Christian uses the ritual elements given to the Jew (Gal. iv. 9), 15. Ritualism goes farther, it has developed enormously since the days of the "fathers," 16. Its vestments condemned by the fathers themselves, 16. How strange to see men of superior abilities to the fathers so void of discernment when they cite them! 16. Anecdote illustrating connexion between Rationalism and Ritualism, 17. The same root of infidelity at bottom—the supplanting of the plain truth of the inspired word, 18. Ritualism looked at from its best side, as advocated by its ablest defenders, 19. Jesus is believed in as a divine person—that the Son of God was a man in this world: at best Ritualism takes its stand on the truth of incarnation, 19. It holds that the only way for a man to receive blessing is by coming in contact with His humanity, 20. Ritualism passes lightly over the grave of Christ, except as a lever to move the affections; but of this use even Socinians and Jesuits have availed themselves, 20. Ritualists hold that when our Lord Jesus departed from this world, the church was that divine system in which the benefits of Christ's incarnation were to be perpetuated for man upon earth, 20, through certain persons, and in a given channel, 20; and that whoever disputes this is a rationalist, 20. Sacramental ordinances said to be the only means of salvation, 21. Christ maintained the ritual system till the cross closed it, 22. The death of Christ sentenced to death the ritual system, 22. The converted robber a witness of it, 22. How Dr. Newman used this, 23. What the converted robber does in reality set forth, 24. Every Christian ought to be in the truest and fullest sense a churchman, 25. Societies or voluntary companies are a practical denial of the Church of God, 25. Before the question of the church comes, a man is put to the test thoroughly by the truth in Christ, 25. The object of the church here is a visible witness, 26. In the epistle to the Romans we have not only incarnation, but Christ that died, Christ that rose; and the Christian acquires a corresponding place, 27. And more than this, we are brought into new relationship with plenary forgiveness, not indeed to make light of sin, but to have everything fairly and fully out before God with the sense that His grace restores the soul, 28. Membership of the body of Christ is not simply a question of faith, 29. The individual and the corporate position, 29. The being certain about forgiveness of sins, and of being a member of the body of Christ, is connected with known relationship, 30. The facts of faith have a substance in them far beyond the facts of sense. Both are real; but the facts of sense may disappear, the facts of faith never, 30. Christianity does not wait till it gets to heaven to be

heavenly, 31. A ritualist is endeavouring to put to death the old man that wont die, 31. The institutions of Christianity—Baptism and the Lord's Supper, 31. Baptism never the sign of life-giving, but of death-giving, 31. Quickening existed before the Lord Jesus came into the world, 32. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received quickening but were not baptized, 32. The Christian starts as a dead man, and is called to act on this great truth—not in trying to die, like a monk or a nun, 32. Ritualism boasts of giving a fuller value than ordinary to baptism, but is not consistent with itself, 33. The Lord's Supper, like baptism, sets forth death, not incarnation, 34. Baptism properly speaking concerns the individual, while the Lord's Supper has no place except in the church, 35. Hold to the truth as God has given it; we have no right to alter anything, or bring in our own thoughts of the matter, 35. Another point:—our relationship is with Christ risen. There is no union with Him in flesh and blood. He that is joined to the Lord is one *Spirit*, 37. Our link with Christ is by nothing less than the presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, 38. All truth therefore hangs together. Sin is gone, righteousness established, union formed by the Holy Ghost, with Christ risen and glorified at the right hand of God, 39. Conclusion.

RITUALISM.

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."—HEB. ix. 24–28.

THE subject on which I am to speak this afternoon might appear altogether opposed to that of Rationalism, which we had last week; but the opposition is only in appearance. No doubt in the minds and intention of many it is a real antagonism; and far be it from me to doubt that, as godly men have been tinged with somewhat of Rationalism, so on the other hand probably even more have suffered from Ritualism. There can be no question to any upright mind, adequately acquainted with both the word of God and the facts growing out of the present state of thought among the children of God in the world, that there are, carried away in these contrary directions, persons who have a true living knowledge of God through the Lord Jesus. But this

proves nothing whatever as to the character of either system in itself. It shows that the children of God themselves have nothing in the bare fact that they are His children to preserve them from the snares of the adversary; that, spite of their being born again, in consequence of allowing human thought and feeling they may be swayed in either direction.

But further, underneath the seeming opposition of the two systems, there is a link, and consequently often no small sympathy, and that which will, I have no doubt, afford the enemy of souls power in his own time to blend them together in a union for which neither might be prepared at the present moment. The reason of this lies in the very simple fact, that as Rationalism is a deification of human powers, in which man presumes by his own mind to judge the word of God, and is therefore the infidelity of the intellect when either carried out to its results or judged in its principle; so on the other hand Ritualism is the infidelity of the imagination, very often with piety underneath it, with a love for the Saviour that may preserve from the full consequences of the system, but in itself always savouring of and tending to idolatry. Now the power of deliverance, as well as that which makes manifest its real character, is what we may most profitably dwell on at this time. It is no pleasure to dissect that which is evil. The momentous thing is to supply God's remedy; and as I endeavoured to bear this in mind in speaking of Rationalism (rather than I would accustom the minds of those then present to details that are, as they ought to be, extremely painful to those who love the Lord or His word), so I shall for the most part restrict myself

at this time to that which may, by God's grace, preserve souls from religious infidelity, giving them divine grounds to judge and reject Ritualism in all its fruits as well as its roots.

Thanks be to God, the remedy is not far off; it is nigh us in our mouth, and in our heart. The truth of the gospel is the best guard, not against Rationalism alone, but also against Ritualism. It is impossible for a soul that really understands the gospel—I do not mean one that is merely born again, but that intelligently knows by grace the word of truth, the gospel of salvation—to be dragged into either. There may be persons, as already said, drawn away for a time into anything; but it is impossible for a person who understands the gospel simply, and who carries its truth really before his soul, and, above all, who has Christ Himself as the object revealed to his heart in love by that gospel, to be left under the snare of either, if indeed to be drawn aside into it at all. I shall show therefore that, if Christians hold fast what God has given them in the Lord Jesus, and also in that mighty work which Christ has accomplished, and which He now reveals by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, as made known to us more particularly in the New Testament, there is a divine preservative which no power of the enemy can break through.

You will have noticed that in the verses just read we have the Spirit of God showing us the relation of the truth and facts of Christianity to what was really a ritual system—the only ritual that God ever acknowledged. In Israel there was a system of religious shadows, furnished by God Himself. Undoubtedly

therefore, if this were all the revelation of God, we ought every one of us to be ritualists. For the believer there can be no question either that God set it up, or that God maintained it by His authority until it had done its work. It was by no means the primitive system, for God took care that promise should be before law and those shadows which in the law were systematised, commonly called the Levitical economy. But the truth of the gospel shows that the Lord Jesus came into the world to give us the truth, which Rationalism, far from having found, confesses that it has not, because it is only in quest of truth—does not profess to know, and even doubts the possibility of knowing. Not only has Christ brought us in Himself the truth for the simplest soul that receives Him, and in Himself the very same Christ for the simplest as for those who are most spiritual, but, besides that, He has wrought a work, the consequences of which are infinite and absolutely exclusive of Ritualism and of the ground it assumes. God has not left us to gather what these consequences are; He has revealed them. He states distinctly some of them in the verses already read. He tells us there that Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands. These holy places belonged to the ritual system of Israel, and they are divinely declared to be “figures of the true.”

Ritualism therefore does not give us the truth any more than Rationalism; it gives us shadows, while Rationalism only leaves men in darkness. It gives us figures of the true, but nothing more. It gives us not the very image, but at best types. Rationalism is a negative and deadly system, gives nothing, and

would destroy all. The ritual system according to God did present in an emblematic way, and to a certain extent, the truth that Christ was about to bring in—not only not the whole of it, far from it—but no part of it in its fulness. It is impossible for any one, for any thing, to be an adequate representation of Christ. We must have Christ Himself in order to have the truth. But we are told here that Christ obtained eternal redemption. This He did as lifted up from the earth as a sacrifice. We are told further that He has entered into heaven itself. Thus, if everything in Him is a reality, there is none in the condition of the creature as it is, except indeed the sorrowful reality of sin; but, properly speaking, we cannot call sin a reality, except for judgment. It is the alienation of man's heart from God, self-will, lust, passion, pride, vanity—yea, it is all a lie against the nature that God made. Being a departure from God himself, to the view of the creature it has no right, save in its guilt and misery, to be called a reality. There was once reality, when God made the heavens and earth, and placed man in the Paradise of delight, when man and all that God surrounded him with was very good, but that reality faded when man sinned; and from that day till God displace the world of sin by Jesus Christ our Lord, it is not according to God, but a vain show in the flesh, though in part with shadows of good things to come. But there is no reality according to God here below; it becomes but a wilderness, where there is no way except to faith. Christ came down to it. He is the reality, and He has done a real work for God and man, as we are elaborately informed in this very epistle (and in all the rest, speaking now in a

general way). This it is which, received into the heart by faith, brings the sinner out of what he was—out of the lie in which fallen nature lives, or rather is dead—brings into the truth and the grace of God, as it is the fruit of love according to His will. He leads into the consciousness of relationship with Himself, and thus prepares the soul, while walking through this world, to await another reality, to await heavenly glory, where Christ Himself is gone before, to await too (though not for Himself) this earth to be made worthy of the God that created it, to be worthy of Him who has reconciled all things unto Himself by Jesus Christ.

Now the Apostle has his soul filled with these truths, and brings them before those to whom he was writing. They also particularly needed it; for they had been accustomed to a ritual system. It was more important for them than for any others to know whether Christianity was a prolongation of that which they had been familiar with among the Jews, or whether it was an altogether new system—not without a certain preparation of the way for it, not without promises going before, and shadows as we have seen, but in itself wholly new—in contrast with ritualistic Judaism. And this is precisely what the Apostle here lets us know, "Christ has not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Consequently we have all now according to God; as there is but one Christ, so but one sacrifice, speaking now of what is needful for God and for the deliverance of man from his ruin,—redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Consequently it is said

not "that he should offer himself often as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others." There again was part of the ritual system ; and Christianity stands in contrast with it. He has offered Himself once and for ever. Were it necessary to offer Himself oftener, He must also often suffer. The two things cannot be separated : for then must He "often have suffered since the foundation of the world." The idea of a fresh offering to God of Christ without fresh suffering is not merely a mistake, but in direct antagonism to His word and the foundation of Christianity.

"But now once," it is said, "in the end of the world"—speaking of it as the theatre of God's dealings, not the mere physical system, but the consummation of the various ages that have been running their course, by which man was put to the proof, and, among other tests, very specially by the ritual system ; "but now once" in the end of all the experimental ways with man, "in the end of the *ages*—hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Thus we find in the Lord Jesus, and in His death, two grand truths. He came to bring God into the world ; He came to put sin out of the world. Rationalism is plainly and certainly ignorant of both ; if Ritualism own the first, it assuredly ignores, and in effect denies, the second—*i.e.* God's putting away sin by redemption. Far from controverting the incarnation, Ritualism makes much of it for its own ends ; but it is very sure that the principle is inconsistent with redemption save in figure. It is impossible for Ritualism to live in presence of the fundamental truth of the gospel, that Christ suffered to

“put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Has He done it or not? Has He failed to do what He came for? Has He indeed, or only once even in figure, “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”?

That there was accomplished on the cross the sacrifice of Christ Himself not even the ritualists deny; nor does one believe that they mean to deny that He put away sin by His death. We are not now discussing what men would say, but judging what their system means. We are searching what Ritualism really is, as judged by the living word of God. I affirm then that, during God’s maintenance of a ritual system for special and worthy purposes, there was no such thing as a sacrifice that would put away sin before God. There were sacrifices; but the very opposite was their character and their result, as we are told in Heb. x. They brought sin to remembrance. They kept the fact of man’s defilement constantly before the eyes of the Jew. It was well that it should be so, being a most wholesome lesson as far as it went. It was of God’s mercy, and in itself right and good, that man should be made to feel his sin till it was put away; and it was not, could not be, then put away. But if I believe the truth of the gospel, sin *is* put away by Christ’s death. Granted that it is, so much the worse for him that does not believe in Christ. The truth and the blessedness of the fact remain for faith; but assuredly it is so much the more terrible for him who substitutes something else for Christ—so much the more fatal, not to the rationalist only, but also to the ritualist.

We must not be deceived by sounds or appearances. We are responsible for the truth now, because the truth

is revealed. And, let it be observed, that all is out between God and man without a veil. There was a veil, but it is rent. Mark the time and fact well: when Jesus died, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. Has this no significance? Everything has that God reveals; but surely no facts more so than those of the cross. Up to that time man was not in the Divine presence. God had come down to man. He was here on earth in the person of the Lord Jesus. He that had seen Him, the Son, had seen the Father. But there was more than this in the death of Christ. In a certain sense He brought God nigh to the sinner during His life; in His death He brings the believer to God. Do *you* believe this? If you really receive and act on it, you are *not* a ritualist. If you believe that you are brought nigh to God, I ask according to what measure? Use your own weapon, you who love Jesus and know Him; have recourse to your own standard. Never give Christ up; never lose sight of Him as the Truth; never fail to bring Him in, whatever the difficulty, whatever the question. Your vantage-ground is that you have Christ, and that you know it. Therefore do you seek humbly, holily, but believingly, to apply the Christ that you have received from God, that the Holy Ghost has made known to your soul by the word of God.

Now you are brought nigh to God, not according to the measure of a Jew, nor even of a Jewish priest, nay, nor even of the Jewish High Priest. You will not say therefore that my doctrine lowers the privileges of a Christian. I am persuaded that there is too often a painful deficiency in the way in which these evil steps

of retrogression to Judaism are apt to be met. Mere protest against them is cold and powerless, the negative process of showing their fallacy here and there. This will never stand in the day either of dark trial or of alluring promise. The heart of man wants something solid; and God would make it sure too. God has revealed according to His own grace, His own truth, His own power, His own wisdom in Christ the Lord; but not merely so—in Christ's redemption. And this is the standing witness and effect of it: the veil is rent. It is not merely therefore, that God has come down to me, but He has consecrated for me a way to Himself—a new and living way through the veil. Ritualism denies this; it renews and again insists on the veil. Who gave it such authority? Not God, who tore it down in answer to Christ's Cross. What warrants it? It is treason against His word. It is in effect a plain, flagrant, inexcusable denial of the revealed effect of the death of Christ. Let it be again said that I accuse no man among their ranks of an intention to nullify the gospel; but it is impossible for an intelligent Christian not to arraign the system—no matter where it may be held. Be it in one that you hope to be a Christian, be it in one that you are as sure as you can be that he is a Christian. Grant all this, which I do with all my heart: yet a Christian's holding an error does not make the error less serious, and cannot consecrate what is contrary to Christ.

I maintain then, that Ritualism is a return from Christianity to figure, and that its doctrine and its practice ignore the nearness to God into which the gospel brings the believer by Christ's work. Is not this true accord-

ing to the plain word of God which you have before you in Heb. ix. x.? This you know I am not wresting; for your consciences cannot evade its force. I appeal to you in the presence of God, whose word you have before you. You might doubt if one were stringing together a cluster of passages which might dazzle or perplex; but I purposely dwell now on a single luminous portion of Holy Writ. One is enough, if there were no others. I hope to show briefly, that throughout the New Testament since the accomplishment of redemption, the same truth is taught in different forms. It is impossible that the truth of God should be inconsistent with itself. I shall show that the scriptures which treat of Christianity are admirably harmonious, that their testimony is uniform, that their meaning is precise, and all demonstrative that Ritualism, though not a rejection of Christ's person, is distinctly a virtual denial of the efficacy of Christ's work as now declared in the gospel.

Thus Ritualism has for one of its pillars the assumption that God has still an earthly priesthood. The assertion of a holy caste of ministrants on earth, who draw near to God for the Christian, thoroughly sets aside the gospel of Christ. Remember that it is no question of Christian ministry. I yield to no man in firmness of conviction that ministry is a divine and permanent institution of Christianity. The truth is that Christian ministry and earthly priesthood are antagonistic, instead of being the same thing. For ministry, Christian ministry, is the service by a divine gift, which brings the truth of God to bear on the soul of man—toward the unconverted, to bring them to God

by the gospel—toward the converted, to instruct them more fully in the truth of the gospel, and of the whole counsel of God in Scripture generally. But earthly priesthood is quite another thing; and so far from its being a part of the institutions of the gospel, the attempt to set it up is beyond just doubts the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. For it is the presumption of a man who might be a Levite, or a leader of the people, to supplant the authority of Moses, and to stand in the place of Aaron, the apostle and the high priest of the Jewish system. It is really a blow struck at Christ's priesthood, as if it was against Aaron chiefly that the rebellion was directed.

The epistle of Jude will show you that this is no mere fanciful application of a type, which has no bearing on the perils of Christians. Indeed I should scorn to take advantage of those who are but ill versed in the types of Scripture. I dare not use what I did not believe on the fullest examination of Scripture to be the truth, but this, though it is enough for me, will not do for you. I beg you therefore to compare with Numbers and Hebrews what we are told by Jude the Apostle. We learn there that not merely apply now the way of Cain and the error of Balaam, but also that men are to perish in the gainsaying of Korah. What is this but the setting up of men since Christianity was revealed to an earthly priesthood, so as to infringe the glory of the Lord Jesus? According to Hebrews He is the true and only Priest, in the sense of one that stands between God and our souls.

In another sense no doubt there is a priesthood under Christianity; but this only furnishes a further

instance that Ritualism is irreconcilable with the Christian's place, as it is a fresh proof of what I have already endeavoured to show, that the power of Christianity is lost where its positiveness is forgotten, and men reduce it to a negation of this or that error. There are those who constantly desire to maintain the truth by saying that there are no priests now. I should reverse the matter, and say, that what the New Testament declares is that all Christians are priests—all who are brought nigh to God. Not that all are ministers of the word; those that minister are the few for the good of the many—of all. No Christian, because he is a Christian, is a minister in the word. Ministry depends not on a man's being a Christian, but on the question whether he has received a distinct power or gift as it is called in Scripture—the gift of the grace of the Lord Jesus, in which he is bound to serve Him whether in the gospel or in the church. Consequently, if we look at Christians, they differ in point of gift. Some are not called to serve the Lord in that way at all; and even those who are have gifts differing, as the apostle says in Rom. xii. When we come to the Christian priesthood, there is one common position for all Christians; and why? Because we are brought nigh to God. The truth of the gospel supposes, not an earthly sacerdocy, but that Christians are priests, and that this is the only real priesthood which God now owns, save Christ's on high. Even our Lord Jesus Christ was not a priest upon the earth, and when here He exercised no such functions. This is the direct statement of Scripture. The same epistle to the Hebrews (chap. viii.) affirms it: so false in every way is the

ritualistic system as applied to Christianity. Even He who is the foundation-stone of all blessing for man, the life and righteousness and glory of the Christian under the gospel—even He was not a priest as long as He lived on the earth. Lifted up from the earth, He became a sacrifice; ascended to heaven, He entered the sanctuary which the Lord pitched, and not man, and was there, according to the word of God, the great High Priest. And who are the priests? If the Lord Jesus fills the type of Aaron, and incomparably more, if Aaron was but a feeble shadow of what Christ is as high priest, who are the sons of Aaron? They are those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. "Behold I and the children whom God hath given me." Who are the children? Christians. He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, as the same inspired writer tells us in the second chapter of the same epistle.

Consequently we see how the doctrine of the types exactly agrees with the plain statements of the gospel. For if He suffered once, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God, He has brought us so perfectly that there can be—there is—no priest between us and God save Himself; and the Lord Jesus, so far from keeping us from God, is the very One who by His death brings us to God, and ever lives to make intercession for us.

Again, this is the present position of the Christian, not merely the future. When we go to heaven, we shall not cease to be priests. When the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ over the earth comes, we shall not cease to be priests; on the contrary, instead of its being as now a position for faith to enjoy and realize

we shall be displayed as kings and priests; we shall reign with Christ. But the gospel, the truth of the gospel, as revealed in the epistles, shows that every Christian is in the place of priest now, not in a merely figurative but most real way, for there is always a reality according to the gospel. Judaism besides law gives us figures of the true; it is dead; and Ritualism only galvanizes the corpse. Christianity gives the reality of the truth and grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This may help to show the immense importance of the theme before you this afternoon. Moreover, it shows how unbelieving is Ritualism, though more respectable in appearance than Rationalism, not so bold perhaps, certainly more reverent in its postures—if not in its impostures. It may salute with a kiss, it may bow down to Jesus, it may give Him ample honour in word; but judged by Scripture, by the ever-living word of God, its heart is far from Him. Yea it is no more true worship of the Lord Jesus than when Israel of old, wrought on by Satan's power, dared to join with Jehovah a calf of gold; for unquestionably the Ritualism of Christendom does not even adhere to the figures of the true. By no means would it be justified if it did restrict itself to ancient shadows of good things to come: I have already shown that, even if it did, it were not Christian. For Scripture affirms that it is idolatrous for Gentile Christians to consecrate to Christian uses the ritual elements given to the Jew. (Gal. iv. 9.)

In point of fact, however, Ritualism goes much farther; and it is a striking fact too, not known by everybody,

that, in spite of its boasted reference to the old writers that are commonly called the "fathers," it has developed enormously since these days. Take, for instance, its strange millinery with colours more suitable to harlequins or the most fantastic of stageplayers, in which men indulge who call themselves Christ's servants—I beg pardon, Christian priests: do the fathers sustain them here? By no means. Not that the fathers will ever be to me a standard either of practice or of orthodoxy. I know them too well to admit such a dream for an instant. It may suit such as have never compared them with the word of God; for I own that it is possible to study them deeply, and to be completely stupefied by them. Indeed there are few greater wonders to my mind than to see men of sweet affections, and of superior ability and attainment, who yet seem given over to minds void of discernment when they cite the fathers. Why they could and do write far better themselves, whenever they follow the word of God; nevertheless they bow down to them, just as a Romanist does before the wafer he worships as his God, or before the Virgin whom he trusts to intercede for his soul.

Not less painfully one sees good men whose consciences and minds seem holden, when they are in presence of the musty remains of these ancient writers. But even they never contemplated what has come to pass in our own day; for it is remarkable that they brand as no better than good-for-nothing people those who scarcely went so far as to indulge in the green and gold vestments at which the common newspapers of the world ring out their amazement. Clement of Alexandria, if I recollect aright, treats such symptoms even

in the germ as utterly disreputable. The truth seems to be, that the dresses that have long become ecclesiastical were originally merely the dresses of the people of that day. There were vast changes brought in when the barbarians overran and overthrew the Roman empire; and that which used to be merely the civil dress of a Roman became, by an extraordinary turn, the ecclesiastical dress of a so-called "Christian priest." They had a particular dress for fast days, and another dress for feasts or ordinary days. This is pretty much, I believe, the origin of that which has long been metamorphosed so strangely, but at the same time so singularly abandoned by some pretenders to ecclesiastical antiquity in our own day. But enough of this.

I go back still to the solemn fact already referred to—the connecting-link between Rationalism and Ritualism, and the more so because it is apt to be unsuspected.

I remember an incident which may a little illustrate this. A friend of mine who was once travelling to Oxford did not identify for a moment an old university chief who was sitting by him. Many years had elapsed since their separation, nor am I aware that there was any particular acquaintance even in earlier days. They were no longer young, and they are now both gone. The question put to his fellow-passenger by my friend was this: "Pray, sir, can you tell me how the Rationalists are getting on at Oxford?" It was an awkward question to one who was a principal leader of Rationalism; for he was, at any rate in physical science, the most distinguished of the seven who since then attained unenviable notoriety by their "Essays and Reviews." He was silent for a moment; but I suppose he saw that

the questioner's face did not indicate one who would be disposed to insult another by an unbecoming enquiry—a question which I am persuaded he would not have put if he had recognized Mr. ——. After a pause the professor answered—"As fast, sir, as the Tractarians will let them." "What do you mean?" said my friend. "This," said the other—and it puts the case pithily enough, and is no bad confirmation of what I have been insisting on already—"The Tractarians say that the fathers are as good as the Scriptures. The Rationalists answer that the Scriptures are no better than the fathers."

The reply brings the case clearly to an issue, and shows us that under wholly different surfaces—intellectual audacity on the one hand, which dares to speak against the word of God, and on the other hand the outward piety or at any rate the genuflection of Ritualism—there is really the same root of infidelity at bottom. There is the supplanting of the plain truth of the inspired word. Both get rid of it, depriving the soul of that which is the only means of a living link between God and man. It does not matter what the means or forms may be, whether the negative process of Rationalism, or the more positive claim of Ritualism: if man comes in—whether it be his rites or his reasoning—so as to exclude God's word, or step between its authority and the soul of man, it comes to pretty much the same result in the end.

It remains to show further, as to this, the general teaching of the New Testament. I have confined myself to a particular passage; but, as before, instead of exposing in Ritualism what is crude, painful, and evidently

evil, I am willing to take it as it presents and loves to present itself—to take it in its best shape from its ablest defenders. It is always fair, if not obligatory, to do so. The more we have to blame another, the more should we let him put in the best appearance, and have the highest credit that your conscience can admit of. Always set out an adversary in the most favourable light you can; you have no business to be an adversary if your cause will not bear this. Why should you lower another? Why harbour an exaggerated or uncharitable thought? It is no unkindness nor want of humility, but on the contrary real love—love for God and His children—to state with all plainness that divine truth which is ruined by Ritualism, ignorant of His nature and of its own opposition to God.

As to the doctrine of Ritualism then I am not now about to say a word of excesses in form and practice, and refuse to dwell on what might be called the abuses of the light-minded people that adopt it. I will not bear hard on the giddy young men and women, or their guiltier seniors. We must turn to look at the gravest and wisest among those that are its leaders. Now, as asserted by those that are most competent, in its fairest light, this is the essential principle of Ritualism: it does not disbelieve in Jesus as a divine person; far from denying that the Son of God was a man in the world, it takes its stand on the grand truth of the incarnation—a truth I hold to be most precious and essential to Christianity. Incarnation means not only God in the world, but a divine person who has taken manhood into His person. It is the union of God and man in the same person. Ritualism is an imaginative

system, built on the truth of incarnation. It maintains that when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was in this world He brought down all needed blessing—power, goodness, love, truth—to bear upon the souls and bodies of men. It holds that the only way for a man to receive the blessing is by coming in contact with His humanity. But then He died on the cross, and is gone. Ritualism always passes lightly over the grave of Christ, rarely dwelling on it, except as a weapon for dealing with the affections, or as a display of divine love. This the falsest systems may do, as Socinianism itself. So the Jesuits were always famous preachers of the cross thus far, with warm appeals to fear or feeling.

Ritualism cannot be said to go beyond this, even taking into account those that might be real believers. For I wish to set it in the light in which they would wish it put themselves. They hold then that, when our Lord Jesus departed from this world, the church was that divine system in which the benefits of Christ's incarnation were to be perpetuated for man on the earth; that consequently the church has made this good by her officials or the clergy. We all know that Ritualism is a violent outburst at the present day, although of course it had its springs before. They hold that by certain persons, in an uninterrupted line from the apostles, who were the personal companions of the Lord Jesus incarnate here below, the benefits of His incarnation are kept up in a given channel, and assured by outward signs or seals, which are the adequate means of conveying the blessings of incarnation to such as submit to them. This is the system. They hold accordingly that any one who disputes this must be a

Rationalist, and that this is the difference between an orthodox man and an unorthodox.

But in fact it is the Ritualists themselves who, without any intention to be unorthodox, are really quite opposed to the truth of the gospel according to God's word, as their system is incompatible with what God has revealed. For, it will be observed, their principle on its own showing slights sin, sets aside its judgment, and ignores redemption. On its theory it is a simple continuation of what was found when the Lord Jesus had *not* suffered on the cross. The Son was as truly incarnate before He died as after. His sacrifice, His death, His resurrection, are altogether distinct from incarnation, though impossible without it. It is granted freely and cordially that incarnation gave us not only the person of the Son of God, but also the condition of humanity in which He could accomplish redemption. As long as He remained simply divine, there could be no link with man; but when He did become a man, no doubt there was according to the blessed will and ways of God the state of the person who was to die in atonement. When He was merely incarnate, it was not yet done.

Observe too the consistency of the system, so far as regards its idea of an earthly priesthood, and of sacramental ordinances as the only means of salvation,—for this is the doctrine. When our Lord Jesus Christ was here below, when He, the Son, became incarnate, before His death and resurrection, He carefully acknowledged priesthood according to the law—a priesthood vested in Aaron and his sons, which in no way belonged to Himself. And as He respected the

Jewish priesthood, so He maintained all the shadows of the law. In other words He threw His own divine weight into the support of the ritual system till the cross closed it. The time was not yet come for God's grace and glory to displace it. It would have been contrary to God's mind to have overthrown it then, and the Lord Jesus, in word and deed as in person, was the expression of God and of His ways. Consequently, as long as the Lord was on the earth, we see His adhesion to the temple, feasts, sacrifices, everything. Nay, in the case of His own person we know it was so from the first, as we find in Luke ii. The Lord observes the times and seasons, and owns fully that earthly system of ritual which God had brought in by Moses. But the moment He died on the cross, the whole system in principle disappeared before God. It was dead—not yet buried perhaps: there was a decent time left for the funeral, but the system was dead and gone as before God. The death of Christ sentenced to death the ritual system; it did infinitely more, but it did that. Then, as we have seen, the veil was rent; and it was not man, nor an accident; it was God who rent it. How could Ritualism subsist with a rent veil? How could it abide for those who had received the Lord Jesus and were by His blood entitled to go straight into the presence of God?

And what a wonderful witness of this truth appears in the converted robber who died by the Lord's side! "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." What more unequivocal proof could be that it was not a bare theory, but, on the contrary, as all the truth is, most practical,—that it was for the souls of men and the

glory of God, for present wants and eternal blessedness. Accordingly, therefore, that converted robber proclaims the falsehood of the ritualistic system. I am aware that the ritualists would answer otherwise, and I remember how it was used by one not behind the chief of them—a man no longer, it is true, in the Protestant ranks of Ritualism, but in Rome, the natural home and necessary end of it all. It was a sermon intended to act upon his old companions;—and something like this was his comment: “Without church or sacrament, without priest, without confession, at once through faith the dying thief received the Saviour and went to heaven.” Many would say, “What admirable doctrine!” Others would add, “How extremes meet! Think of Dr. Newman preaching the doctrine of Plymouth,” the free and full grace of God in the gospel. But not so; it is evil, root and branch: let me tell you why. What he taught is, that the strength of the faith in the converted robber was so great and precious in God’s sight, that He, in consequence of the necessary lack of the church and sacramental channels, was pleased to honour the faith of the man so much as to give him this great indulgence. Now I affirm that this is a denial of the gospel: no man who understood it could teach thus. It is vital error, really leaving out Christ and His work, and making all of what was in the man:

But God forbid that anyone here should go away with the thought that I am pronouncing on the author of this discourse: I would only compare his doctrine with the truth of the gospel; and I do reject that which opposes the gospel, without a word about his

own personal condition, of which I know nothing. It is better not to speak of what we do not know; but, as a servant of the Lord Jesus, I do speak of that which he has taught or preached, and I say that it is untrue that God saw such a meritorious value (for this is the doctrine) in the faith of the thief under those circumstances that it counterbalanced the want of church, priest, and sacrament. All such thoughts are simply religious imagination without the smallest warrant from the word of God. They are not the mind or the language of faith.

No! what the converted robber does in reality show is the value of Christ and His blood, the present, immediate, everlasting efficacy, for a most guilty but now repentant soul, of that which Jesus wrought for sinners on the cross. There sin was judged; there was God's grace shown to the very uttermost; there was a soul that in the face of every obstacle received it with simplicity; but not a thought of anything in himself that could be an offering to God—not a trace of presenting, as it were, his faith, and God accepting this as of such signal value in His sight, that He could and would dispense with what in strictness ought to have been for souls in order to salvation. Not so. He had what ought to have been; he had what alone can suffice for a sinner with God. Not that I deny for a moment the place of the church; for I must tell you that I am a churchman—a high churchman if you will—and that, viewing the church whether as the body of Christ or as the house of God, I have the strongest convictions of what is true and obligatory on the Christian in respect of it.

Do not suppose any play on the word church ; for indeed I hold it to be the place of every Christian man to be in the truest and fullest sense a churchman. It is not enough for a man to be a Christian without being a churchman ; nor is it the same thing. Nor do I admire the Augustinian subterfuge of an invisible church. I mean no offence to my dissenting friends who are present, but I am thoroughly convinced that they are wrong, and that most evangelicals are little if at all better. That is to say, I have been for many years satisfied that societies, or voluntary companies, are a practical denial of the church of God. Therefore, as far as the principle is concerned, however far apart in application, I shall go quite as far as Dr. Newman or Dr. Pusey, although I abhor the embrace of Babylon, which has seduced the one, if not the other. I do not regard the woman that sits on the seven hills as the church of God, but, on the contrary, as a spurious counterfeit, as the chief and central spring of all the dark and turbid streams of Ritualism ; for she sits also by many waters.

But I maintain that, before the question of the church comes, a man is put to the test thoroughly by the truth in Christ ; and this is of vital moment in every conceivable way. It is not the church first, and then Christ ; but Christ first, the church being merely the complement, though of all importance. And sure I am that if a man holds simply but intelligently withal to Christ, he will be little disposed either to Romanism or to Dissent. He will be content with the church of God, as He puts it in His word, and makes it good in fact, spite of all the external ruin ; and this is

what I mean by being a churchman. I repeat that I do not mean merely in an invisible way, which is wholly unscriptural. Before the church began, there was invisibility for the saints, save individually: the very object of the church here was a visible witness, though it will only be perfect in glory, and it has failed like all else. At the same time, I maintain that there is the reality of the church of God on the earth, as a "ruined man" supposes a man, though in ever so wretched a state.

Now, what makes the importance of this plain is, that the truth of the gospel deals with the soul—with man as a sinner—altogether guilty, but shows us God's dealing with its evil in His own grace, yet righteously putting it away; that is, in the maintenance of His own character. It is there that Ritualism is so offensive, and utterly hostile to the truth of God. If you substitute the incarnation for the atonement, for redemption, you set aside the judgment of sin; you make it a mere accident—something at the very best which comes in as a sort of make-weight of the incarnation; you thus ignore its only proper place. Whereas the truth of the gospel is founded on a Christ, not incarnate only, but who has died—both to put away the old man, with all its evil, and to begin a new creation—who has entered into a new and most real place, not the ruined scene of sin and fallen man. For He that was God as well as man—who was not in a fallen condition, but as man "the holy thing"—went down under all the consequences of the fall on the cross, and there achieved the perfect victory. Now the Holy Ghost is sent down from heaven to proclaim the present immediate results

of that victory to every soul that believes. This is the gospel, and what accordingly you find everywhere.

In the foregoing statements I have referred to the facts of the gospel; but if we take up Romans, it is the same thing. There it is not incarnation only, but Christ that died, and Christ that rose; and the Christian acquires a corresponding place. Consequently it is not the vagueness of Ritualism any more than the darkness of Rationalism—cold, comfortless both of them indeed; but what is really presented is that God has fairly and fully brought out all the evil, in order to put it away. Christ “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Consequently now it is not only mercy. I grant you the coming of Christ to the earth was most rich mercy; but there is more than mercy now. The death of Christ has laid the foundation of *righteousness*. It is not only that He was the righteous one; He was this in everything here below; but now the wonderful thing is—what the gospel shows—that it is righteousness to justify the believer, yea, the ungodly—that God is righteous now in behalf of him who has received Jesus, regarding him without a spot or stain in His sight. That day the converted robber was fitted for heaven, and thus is every soul made meet that believes the gospel. By a suffering Christ (1 Pet. iii. 18) we are brought to God—brought in grace and power by faith. We know Him thus, having learned His love in our greatest need.

But then it is not merely this. We are brought into a new relationship, and I beg your attention for a little to it. There are many who believe in Christ, and are quite sure that God has forgiven them their sins. I would to

God that every Christian, be he Dissenter, or Anglican, or what not,—I would to God that every person who has received the name of Jesus stood “full of the remission of sins,” as Luther calls it. He said the church was full of the remission of sins. I would to God that every individual were really so, that he had the simple, full, happy, constant sense of being forgiven. I do not mean by this that a man is to be without grief and shame if he have slipped aside and dishonoured the Lord. By such a plenary forgiveness I do not mean that, if a man falls into evil, he is to make light of it because it is all forgiven. Who teaches such doctrine? I do hold, that what God has given him by the gospel is not lost by his folly; but because he is forgiven in the sight of God, he is called upon to clear the Lord’s name, and humble himself, and confess to the Lord,—to go to God about it because he has a great High Priest. It is here that the high priesthood of Christ comes in. It is not even going to Christ, still less to a man upon the earth, but going by Christ to God; and the reason is, that God in the gospel has now proved His perfect grace and salvation by giving all freely to my soul. Consequently, as it is against God that I have sinned, I use that Saviour, and am entitled to use Him, as my High Priest,—to go to God and acknowledge my sin—to have it fairly and fully out before God, with the certainty that His grace will restore my soul, and does.

But this supposes that the believer is in a settled relationship. He is in the relationship of a child of God; and more than this, he is a member of the body of Christ. But it may be well to warn you of the great mistake of supposing that membership of the body of

Christ is simply a question of faith. There must be besides faith something more; and the sum of it is, that on the ground of your faith you receive the Holy Ghost, baptizing you into the one body. (Acts i. 5; ii.; 1 Cor. xii. 13.)

Thus it is seen, as I wish to show, that the position of a Christian is a living relationship both individually and corporately. You will understand therefore why one spoke of the difficulty of conceiving an intelligent Christian that is not also a firm churchman in the true sense of the word. In short, he is not merely an individual. This he is, and he is first of all an individual brought to God; but then he shares in the infinite blessing of being a member of Christ's body, and this now on the earth. This I mean by being a churchman. Such was the church as it was known in early days: why should it be otherwise now? Why should anything else suffice now? What do we value? Is it what comes from God, or what is of man? This is the question.

Hence, through all the Epistles, beginning with Romans, we find the great truth that the Christian's place is by death and resurrection, not merely by incarnation. Thus are maintained two principles—first, God glorified by the Lord Jesus about everything that could harm us; next the believer justified from *sin*, as well as from his *sins*. When incarnation is put instead of the gospel, it brings you back where the work ought to be done: you are waiting for what you have not. That is the state in which Ritualism leaves you; consequently you must needs go and take advantage of religious ordinances. What are they? Promises. It would be presumptuous, according to Ritualism,

for a man to know that his sins are forgiven ; it would be presumptuous for one to say that he is a child of God ; it would be presumptuous to take the place of certainly being a member of the body of Christ, except in the vague sense that every man of the world is who behaves decently and goes to church. Now in Scripture all is real, and not only so, but made known ; it is communicated in power to our souls, because all our action has to be founded on a known relationship. Why you ought to know this yourselves. Supposing, for instance, any one of you is in the position of a child, how can you behave rightly, how can you carry yourself in a becoming manner, towards your father or mother, if you do not own your own relationship—if you have doubts about it? A naughty child is one that forgets itself, its father or its mother ; and so with a wife or with a servant. It is precisely thus with a Christian.

Consequently see the ruinous effect of systematic doubting. No wonder that, where incarnation takes in effect the place of Christ's redemption, there are doubts unremoved. Ritualism takes away what Christianity has revealed as come, as it also sets up a veil which leaves man outside of God's presence. As long as there was a veil, God dwelt in the thick darkness, and man was on the other, the wrong, side ; whereas the essence of Christianity is that God has both come down to me and brought me to Him while I am in this world. No doubt it is a matter of faith, but this does not make it to be less a reality. Indeed the facts of faith have a substance in them far beyond the facts of sense. They are both real, but the facts of sense may disappear,—the facts of faith never. You

are brought into an eternal reality when put in contact with the world of faith; but you are brought in *now*.

This is Christianity. You do not wait till you get to heaven to be heavenly. This is part of the new relationship. Again, you are dead with Christ,—not merely dying. The ritualist is trying to die. He is endeavouring, poor man, to put to death that old man that won't die. There is always a killing, but it is never killed; and no wonder. The fact is, there is no power but God's that can deal with it; and it is God who has done it in the cross of Christ. The believer, the Christian who understands the gospel, starts with this precious truth.

And this shows the place in which the institutions of Christianity come. I hope there is nobody here that makes light of baptism or the Lord's supper; but I dare say there are a great many here who but little understand their true import. Now I am not going into debatable points, but to state the certain truth of God. It is notorious that baptism is used by the ritualist as a means of getting life. That is what he means when he talks about "baptismal regeneration"—that a person is brought into life by that act duly administered by one who is in the apostolic succession. I am not maligning or exaggerating in any way. They would say so themselves in stronger terms, if possible. Yet mark how the whole system perishes before the divine word.

In the first place, according to Scripture, baptism is never the sign of life-giving but of death-giving. It is the sign of having part with Christ in His death. It is never presented in Scripture as a means of quickening. Those who say so are altogether wrong in the very prin-

ciples of Christianity. Death is what we want; and not merely life. There was always life-giving in the sense of quickening. Do you suppose that before the Lord Jesus came into the world there were not persons quickened? This was before anything was heard of baptism. To be sure: who can doubt it? Do you suppose that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not receive quickening from the Son of God as much as you and I? But they were not baptized for all that; and I am not going to give up my baptism, nor what Scripture tells me baptism means. I am not going to listen to people who tell me it is either the means of new birth or only the sign of it. I hold it to be the outward sign of a most blessed truth peculiar to Christianity; and the truth is this,—not quickening (which is not peculiar to Christianity, but common to all saints from the beginning) but that I am dead with Christ, which never could be said till Christ died. Consequently the Christian starts with this as the grand truth on which he is called to act, in not trying to die like a monk or a nun, endeavouring to kill the old man, but believing and acting on his faith that God has slain it,—that we are crucified with Christ and nevertheless live,—that the old man is dealt with by divine judgment on the cross of Christ, and that I, receiving Christ, have all that blessing now.

Assuredly our blessed Lord did not die for Himself—Scripture has no thought of it, but the contrary. There was no old man in Christ: the man that says so is not a heretic only but an Antichrist. The truth of the gospel is that He who had no sin died for us who had nothing else, and the consequence of His

mighty work is that we are not only quickened, but delivered from sin by His bearing its judgment. He did not leave the old man as before. That was the condition of the Old Testament saints. It was not gone for them; to us it is. I do not mean by this that we are perfect in the sense that there is no such thing as the flesh in us; but what Scripture shows is that I am entitled by the death of Christ to treat my old man as already judged. I am entitled to take all the comfort, as completely as if it were actually gone for ever. It is gone in the sight of God as truly as when Christ comes. At His coming we shall have all the results manifestly; but now I have them to my faith, and am called to act according to such a place in the sight of God.

It is instructive to see that Ritualism, like every other human system, denies this, while after all it is one of its great boasts to give a fuller than ordinary value to baptism. You will invariably find that the people who boast of their soundness about baptism are, as I believe, wrong about baptism. The best course is never to boast of anything but Christ. You are always right there; but the moment you begin to boast of this doctrine or of that, I would not give much for your doctrine after all. But when content to have only Christ to boast of, He will be with you, and make your doctrine to be good and sound, not by your magnifying your own possession of it, but by your holding simply to Christ. We have got all the truth in Him, and may the Spirit of God make us increasingly true to Him!

But there is more than this. I said, that first of all Ritualism is false in its theory of baptism—in the very

meaning of it ; but, further, even as a system it is most inconsistent, because the principle is, that these blessings of the incarnation are only through the appointed channel or the well-known ordinances ; but every ritualist (that is full-blown, at any rate) would acknowledge at once that Christian baptism is valid even if administered by a woman, and of course by a man. Thus they hold that every Christian is competent to baptize in emergency ; that is to say, it is valid. No doubt they do not think it orderly, but still they acknowledge it to be real. The Romanist does so. That is the doctrine of Catholicism, no matter what its form may be. Dissenters and most Evangelicals do not allow this, strange to say ; but all Catholics so called, east, west, north, south, agree in it. Now, if this be the case, if baptism be the means of getting life, there is the most fundamental blessing of Christianity, according to Ritualism, received entirely apart from the apostolic succession duly administered in the appointed way. Thus, even in its foundation, it cannot stand ; for, as usual, God takes care that a thing which is false shall be inconsistent. It is a mark set up as it were by the roadside to warn people that there is danger here, and that the truth is elsewhere. The tale does not even hang together. The witnesses do not agree.

Take the other ordinance, the Lord's Supper, and the same result appears. What does the Lord's Supper set out ? The incarnation ? Not at all. The Lord's Supper shows that He who became incarnate died. But this ever-recurring institution of Christianity is not individual like baptism, which is strictly so, and properly speaking is outside the church. Properly

speaking it belongs to me as a Christian. Were there no such thing as the corporate system of the church, I should be, and ought to be, baptized as a Christian; but the Lord's Supper has no place except in the church. No person therefore is at liberty to take the Lord's Supper by himself, or in a hole-and-corner way with one person **here** or another there. That is not the *Lord's Supper*, but is merely such a person's supper.

The Lord's Supper is not according to Christ's intention or its own meaning unless on the ground of the church of God; nor ought one for all considerations on earth to partake of that bread or that cup except on the divine foundations of the church of God according to His word. We are not at liberty to give up or to alter; we may not bring in our own thoughts or modifications under any pretence whatever. This has nothing to do with the question of the church being in a state of confusion. I grant it; but there is the more reason why we should hold to the truth of God if we know it—the unbending word that God has given. Be as gracious as you will to those who do not understand it; but let your carefulness be for the Lord's glory by your own holding fast the truth. Make allowance for others: it is all well, but another thing. Grace would do it; but hold you fast under all circumstances to what you know to be the will of the Lord Jesus. Now, in the Lord's Supper, supposing that the mass of God's children anywhere had gone off, some here, some there, and there were only two or three that joined in taking the Lord's Supper according to Christ's institution, what is the meaning of it? Is it not so far a witness of the one body of Christ? It would be very presumptuous for two or

three persons to say, "We are the body of Christ;" but it would be no less presumptuous for them to take the Lord's Supper on any other ground than that of Christ's body. If they are not thus, it is an unauthorized human act; on the other hand, they must hold fast to His name as members of His body, and simply partake of that bread in His name. This is its meaning. It is the remembrance of Himself; but it is the showing forth of His death, not of His incarnation.

Here again see how utterly false the ritualistic system is. In short, it is a wilful, deliberate, systematic going back to what existed before the death of Christ; it is the annulling of what God has introduced now, and what the Holy Ghost is holding to. The incarnation was a step towards the great end; the end was the judgment of sin, and the establishment of righteousness through the death of Christ, but displayed in Him risen from the dead.

This brings me to another point. My relationship is with Jesus risen. Undoubtedly He came down and took part of flesh and blood; but why? "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." It was not merely to continue the benefits of what He did when He was living. He did indeed attract when He was alive, but substantially the disciples that followed the Lord Jesus in His life were on the same ground as the Old Testament saints. They saw and heard more; but it was simply this—that their eyes saw, and their ears listened to, the One for whom the Old Testament saints had been waiting; but when His death and resurrection took place, and the Holy Ghost was given, the whole was changed, and Chris-

tianity came in ; and the going back to what was before the death and resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost tends to apostasy from Christianity, although real Christians may be entangled by the snare.

This is surely serious if true. Let me just direct you very briefly to a few Scriptures. Take 1 Corinthians vi. —“He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” It is not a question of joining Him in flesh when He was here below. No doubt He took flesh and blood : but this is not the link of union. “He that is joined to the Lord is one *spirit*.” Again, who can deny that the expressed doctrine of 2 Corinthians v. is this,—that “he died and rose again, that we should not live unto ourselves, but unto him that died for us and rose again ?” Then he says, “Though we have known Christ after the flesh” (that is, when He was incarnate, and when the ritualistic system was still in force)—“Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” Now that Christ is dead and risen, and the Christian brought into association with Him at the right hand of God, the surpassing glory of the new position completely blots out any connection that was formed when He was here below. As long as He was here, there could not be union. There might be that which looked onward to this high privilege, but it could not yet be given righteously. Now it is, and we are brought into it, and hence the connection of the Holy Ghost with it. It is not merely by faith, but by the Holy Ghost, which is a very important truth indeed to bear in mind. Our link with Christ, I repeat, is by nothing less than the presence of the Holy Ghost

sent down from heaven, acting in us individually and also as the body of Christ.

I have referred to Galatians: "I am crucified with Christ" (not incarnate, simply), "nevertheless I live." Take again Ephesians i., and you will find that Christ only became the head of the church after He died, rose, and went to heaven. So false is the system of sending us back to what Christ was as incarnate, and merely perpetuating that kind of blessing, that the doctrine of Ephesians first presents Christ when He died, and then He is seen raised up, and sits at the right hand of God; and only so does He become the head of the body. Now we belong to that body, or we are nothing. If we are now in living association with Christ by the Holy Ghost, we are of Christ's body, exalted at the right hand of God; and that body had no existence till the head was there. So in Colossians it is said, "Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead." He is then the beginning. When He was here below, He was not the beginning; He alone was going to be as risen. He alone was to be the head of the church, but this required the putting away of sin. How could the Lord Jesus be united to us while our sins were not blotted out? and how could the Holy Ghost dwell in us when sin was not yet judged? We see therefore how all the truth hangs together. Sin is gone, righteousness established, union is formed by the Holy Ghost with Christ risen and glorified at the right hand of God.

This is, I believe, the truth of Christianity. The gospel touches on the mystery that was hidden from ages and from generations. Need it be said that this is

what we are called to testify? Not the church only or chiefly, but above all Christ whom God has given head over all things to the church. It is the body to which we belong; the Christ of whom we are members.

May the Lord grant then that holding fast the truth, we may bear witness to it! It is the best answer of all to Ritualism.



TRUE SANCTIFICATION

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."—JOHN xvii. 17-19.

I PROPOSE to treat with a little freedom the great truth of sanctification, Christian sanctification, not confining myself to the verses which introduce the term in the passage just read, but connecting with them some other portions of the word of God which set forth the same great truth, either as the Lord here introduces it, or as carrying it out in practical detail. That there is a very special sense in the way in which our Lord employs the term must be evident to any one who weighs His words. What I hope to shew may convince some (who may not perhaps have perceived it before) of the danger of taking only one side of any truth, let it be ever so precious. We shall also see, I trust, that the subject is larger and deeper in God's word than anywhere else. This is no disparagement of that which may have been seen by many of the children of God. We ought to delight that it is so; and not least such of us as find out how much more there is to gather than they had even conceived. Why should we wonder if we find the mind of God infinitely rich as compared with our own? We ought to expect it rather, and should constantly bring our little measure

of insight into the truth of God with the confident assurance that we shall find that there is far more that had escaped our notice even where we have laid real hold of a truth. I am not now about to dwell upon that which is erroneous. There are views prevalent at this time in Christendom which diverge far from truth on this very subject. My present purpose is not at any length at least to deal with what I believe to be unfounded, but to attempt the happier task of searching out with simplicity what the plain truth is, and thus of demonstrating with the clearest evidence how much there is in God's word of prime importance which is never found in the measures of man.

Now our Lord, when He says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," seems to me to give a most plain and positive proof that what is commonly the view of sanctification prevailing among the children of God is at any rate defective,—that even those who see what is from Him see but a small part of the truth. In general sanctification is limited to the practical work that the Spirit of God carries on in the souls of those who, though born of God, have much to contend with, but find power in His grace through the knowledge of Christ against their own evil. It is evident that this cannot apply to verse 19; and this on the surface of it. It must be owned therefore that sanctification must have a bearing different from ordinary thought, and incomparably larger than that to which it is usually confined. "For their sakes I sanctify myself," says our Lord Jesus.

Thus at the outset it is happy for a simple child of God to find plain proof that it cannot mean the amelioration of fallen humanity. He has the certainty in his soul that the Lord Jesus does not here refer sanctification to the

Spirit's dealing with an evil nature. There was no evil in Him to be subdued or improved: what child of God does not reject such a thought with horror?

Hence it is that many have through ignorance and haste fastened a meaning on our Lord's sanctifying Himself very remote from the truth. Thus some of old supposed that our Lord used it in some figurative way of His sacrifice, if not of other truths. But it can readily be shewn that this is altogether a mistake. There is no reason for departing from the radical thought that is always contained in "sanctification." It invariably means the setting apart unto God of those that are concerned. This is its true and simple meaning, from which there is not the least reason to depart here. It does not matter where the word is found in scripture: sanctification when used of a man always means his setting apart to God. How the person is set apart is another matter. In the Jewish system we know the nation itself was so. This was after an outward sort, and was effected by various ordinances, more particularly by that of circumcision; but in fact it was a sanctification that was carried out in all the details of a Jew's life. The whole ritual system of ordinances and judgments which ran through the practical habits of a Jew forms the evidence, measure, and material of his being so set apart unto God.

But the striking thing that we find in our Lord's unbosoming of Himself to His Father on this occasion is, that there is now a new kind of setting apart. Within those of old set apart as Israelites we have the disciples themselves, to be set apart after a fresh sort, nay even the Lord deigning to set Himself apart for their sakes. For His own sake He needed nothing. We must find room therefore for thoughts differing widely from those

prevalent among men. Indeed there cannot be a more striking proof of the depth of the setting apart of the Christian to God than the patent fact, that our Lord here prays the Father that the disciples, already morally apart from the Jewish people, who were themselves apart from all other peoples on the face of the earth, should be sanctified by the truth. He was not content with their being drawn to His person here below; He was about to make them more than followers of Himself, in whom they already had faith. All the rest was true; yet He prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth." It was no longer therefore on the face of it a question of the law. This should be beyond controversy. From the people who had the law the disciples were to be sanctified. The Jews might be a holy people, but the disciples were to be sanctified not only from men but from Israel—from all they themselves had been. They were to be set apart after a new sort altogether. The law which severed the practice of Israel from the Gentiles is not the rule of Christian life.

But even this is not all. The Lord Jesus in carrying out this setting apart or sanctification of the disciples shews that He must contribute to it personally, and in order to this that He must set Himself apart. "For their sakes," as He says, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Now the first thing to which I would here call attention is the instrument employed. The disciples were to be sanctified, as He says, "through *thy* truth." Then the Lord explains what He means by the Father's truth. "Thy word [the Father's word] is truth."

Undoubtedly the Father's word is most directly to be

found from the time when, and in the holy writings where, His name as Father was clearly revealed. It is in the New Testament, as we all familiarly know, that the Father's name was thus declared. We find our Lord Jesus from the beginning, as in the Gospel of Matthew for instance, most carefully declaring that name. But we know too that the disciples did not yet enter into its real power. This could not be in the transitional state through which the disciples were passing with the Lord. All the time of His ministry, and with increasing plainness towards the close of it, He was intimating that an immense change was at hand. In the chapter read (John xvii.) He says that which a little connects itself with what has been now remarked—"I have declared unto them [unto the disciples] thy name, and will declare it." He had been already doing so through His life, but it does not terminate there—quite the contrary. It was to be declared with still greater fulness afterwards. There were many things He had to communicate which their state forbade. They could not bear them now. When the Spirit of truth was come, He would guide them into all the truth.

It is therefore more particularly in the scriptures of the New Testament that we have the Father's name set out and made known, the Lord Jesus declaring it either in person or by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is the Father's word then that is most manifestly and immediately given us there. And what a mighty change, my brethren, this was!—that He who remains still, as He always is, God, the only true God—that He who had been revealed to the sons of Israel as Jehovah, and even before their immediate parents, to

those that are called "the fathers" (to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) as the Almighty,—that He was now making Himself known in the intimate name and relationship of Father. But we must remember that there is something more than this. It is not merely a nearness of love, but it was as the *Son* knew God the Father. That is, it was as He is in truth—in the deepest and fullest way in which the only One capable of knowing the Father from all eternity knows Him. And He who had known the Father from all eternity—the only begotten Son—had come down, was a man upon earth, and though born of woman He was still the Son. In this condition He walked in unbroken communion with the Father. All this was really new, and the disciples were permitted to see and know the fruit of this holy fellowship. But now they are told more. The wondrous truth is more clearly made known that the Lord Jesus by the work which He would effect for them, and which He in spirit sees already finished, would bring them, as no others could be, into a most real and profound enjoyment of the same relationship—would bring them, even while passing through this world, to know the Father as none had ever known Him in this world but Himself the Son.

I grant you there was in the knowledge of the Father by the Son that which was ineffable and entirely beyond the creature; but then we must remember, brethren, that our knowledge of the Father is in a certain sense above mere creature knowledge. Not that of course we ever cease to be creatures, even in the glorified state, but that we now enter a wholly new place as partakers of the divine nature, and with the Holy Ghost given that we may enjoy it in power as

well as testify it to others. We are now brought out distinctly and consciously as the children of God, being born of God; and, further, the Lord Jesus, having closed the whole estate of the race as such in the cross, and having entered into the new and final condition of man according to the counsels of God in His presence on high, the time was come for the Father's name and truth to be known in the Holy Ghost, as it was impossible before or otherwise.

It is in view of all this then that our Lord prays that the disciples might be sanctified through the Father's word—through His truth. And indeed the knowledge of Christ has consequences immensely greater than even that to which I have already referred. It is not only that we are now rendered capable by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us of appreciating His mind, but we are said to "have the mind of Christ." It is not only that that which was not revealed of old is now, and that we enter into it, as the same chapter that I have referred to proves (1 Cor. ii.); but, more than this, all scripture is sensibly transfigured for us, if one may say so, by the knowledge of the Son of God thus revealed.

Thus, if we but take up the legal ordinances, there is not one of them but what is now filled with a new and heavenly light. It is not therefore that the Father's word is to be necessarily restrained to the full unfoldings we have in the New Testament, but the light of the Son of God is reflected from every part of scripture. The very same portion which is understood by a Jew in one way conveys wholly distinct and infinitely deeper lessons to the Christian in another. This is nothing fanciful in us, nor shadowy as to scripture, but an effect of its own real fulness in the light of Christ. Take

a pious Jew reading the law, or the Psalms, or the prophets, before the Lord Jesus came. What he saw was true enough, and had its own importance for the object for which it was literally given; but how immensely enhanced and enlarged and deepened when the connexion with Christ as we know Him is seen! Thus the revelation of the Lord Jesus, and this too as the One who declared the Father to the disciples, affects every part of the word of God, making that which in its primary application is merely an institution of the law to be a witness of gospel truth, of divine grace, of heavenly things.

Take for instance the great day of atonement. A Jew reads Leviticus xvi., and has before his mind certain important institutions of the law: the high priest, the bullock, the goats, the application of the blood within and without, and the confession of the sins on Azazel sent off into the wilderness. All this is before him; but to us how different! It is not that we deny or slight any one part, nor that the fuller truth, the Father's word (to apply it to this subject), is such that one loses an atom of what a Jew saw; but that the Jew has not the smallest conception of that which we are permitted to know in fellowship with Christ, as we look on the things that are unseen and heavenly. We see the High Priest going into the holiest, but have its application in an altogether distinct way. We see our Lord Jesus Christ going there, not alone; we see others *in* Him.

Not a word of this identification is said in the chapter. It is a mystery; and the mystery was not then revealed. Now it is. It is not merely a question of the sons of Aaron, and that we have the force of it

made good in ourselves in a new way. Christ is known not merely as a single person, so to speak, but complex. The New Testament gives us to see Him constituting us a part of Himself; we are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Thus in the One who goes into the holiest we behold our own portion as brought into the presence of God. We are not like the people that stood without, waiting for the reappearance of the high priest, when their consciousness of acceptance is imparted. We are entitled to an incomparably deeper knowledge of this sacrifice, because it enters into that within the vail, instead of waiting for what is published outside. Ours is what is before the eyes of God in heaven; and not merely the measure of acceptance that the people would form from seeing the high priest come out; it is founded on the infinitely more glorious fact of what God sees in the blood and in the great High Priest who presents it before Him. In short, what we are brought into is not the measure of the comfort or of the judgment formed by a pious mind, even though the Spirit of God be working therein. What we rest on is what God the Father sees in the Son and His work, and what the Holy Spirit testifies accordingly.

Thus therefore for us all is changed. Hence, we know, the great force of that word which I do not suppose a Jew will ever know as the Christian does—"the righteousness of God." The way in which Israel will have it made known, more particularly, will be rather as to the form "the righteousness of Jehovah;" but we see "the righteousness of God" as such, entering in our measure into that which the depths of His moral nature have found, all that is suitable to Himself completely glorified in the Lord Jesus by His work; and then God

according to His counsels dealing with us suitably, for we are made His righteousness in Christ.

This may illustrate the way in which the Father's truth, the Father's word, is the instrument of setting us apart to God the Father as given directly in the New Testament, but not confined to it, as just seen. 'What I am more anxious still to shew is that which might easily enough be overlooked—the complete change that the knowledge of Christ has thus revealed on the basis of redemption already accomplished in the Holy Ghost sent down to bring us into all its fruit now in faith,—the change that is wrought by this in our appreciation and enjoyment and application of all the word of God. In short, the result of Christ revealed as we know Him is that we see scripture generally as we never did before. Many of us have said, and many more have felt if they have not said, that such a knowledge of the Lord Jesus makes the Bible to be a new book even if we had been Christians before. I am perfectly persuaded that many present in this place know what this is. I am appealing to what has passed through their own souls in feeling. Instead of the questions, the anxieties, the unsolved thoughts that they have had, the vagueness with which the truth of God was approached, and their own relationship too with God, now they have seen it fully through the grace of God as far as any of us can speak of anything being full: but, in truth, *we may*, for God our Father speaks of us as knowing Himself without a doubt or question. He speaks even of the youngest among us, the babes that have an unction from the Holy One and know all things. How could the Father so speak of the least of His family? He has given them Christ and the Holy Ghost.

Yes, we are sanctified by the truth, and the Father's word is truth. This it is then that has made such an immense change. The Christian is brought out of the old contracted way of looking at the word of God. We know what it is now no longer to be half Jew and half Christian. We have been brought by His infinite grace in the gospel to appreciate Christ, to embrace all the revelation of Christ, to see that, whatever might have been the literal application, it is now absorbed and lost in the brightness of One who fills the mind of the Spirit from Genesis i. to the end of Revelation xxii.

All scripture is thus our heritage, and nothing less. Only we need to know the Father in the Son in order to read it all thus. I shall not be charged at any rate with abridging; nor does such a view admit even in appearance of shutting up the Christian to that which the Jew had as a rule of death which some would persuade us to regard as our rule of life. I rather think that those who plead for the law are more liable to that accusation. No, beloved friends, let us not abandon what our Saviour spreads before us in its infinite extent for that by which God was shutting up the proud Jew to condemnation. If we had been Jews, we have left that kind of sanctification behind. The disciples were not only Jews, but believing Jews; yet they needed to be (and were not yet) sanctified by the truth.

Sanctification then was not conversion (for they were converted), but the separating power of the Father's word which they were about to prove. And the mighty change was wrought in them. How was it wrought? What has the Lord said? "Sanctify them through thy truth." Undoubtedly that which wrought this, as far as the written word was concerned, was the new de-

velopment of divine truth where the Father's name as revealed in and by the Son was the distinguishing characteristic force of it.

In short, the instrumental means was the New Testament. But then so far from this taking away one fraction from the Old, it is the best way to make the Old truly our own; thus is it really understood. Knowing the Father we enter in and enjoy every part of the word of God. There is nothing therefore lost. It is not imagining ourselves to be Jews that will give us the truth or sanctify us. On the contrary, it was precisely out of all that was Jewish those were taken who had been really Jews. It is a question now of one new man in Christ.

Thus then we may see clearly the general ground on which the Lord speaks, and somewhat of that weighty change that was to be brought about by the power of the Spirit of God. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." You must remember that the disciples were not yet on Christian footing. This sanctifying that is spoken of here is really setting them apart as Christians. It was not the communication of life, which is not sanctifying. On the other hand it does not refer simply to the practical work that goes on day by day in the heart of the child of God. This is true, and important too; and there are scriptures that speak of it in this light exclusively, as 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4; v. 23; Heb. xii. 14. There is a sanctification or setting apart unto God the Father of a more general kind, and more fundamental too. This, without excluding the practical work going on all through, is what (I believe) the Lord Jesus refers to; the setting apart, in that new proper Christian character and power, of the disciples who then

surrounded the Lord Jesus. They were still connected with the old condition of things, having been Jews up to this moment. The time was just at hand when they were to be brought out of their Judaism. The Lord Jesus appears to have this in His mind.

But this is not all. He does not merely say, "Sanctify them through thy truth"—the Father's truth, more particularly and directly in the Christian scriptures commonly called the New Testament; but further He says, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." It was no question of the land of Judea now. The world was before them. Thus, if there was the intimacy of setting apart to the Father, there is also an universality of mission. Though the Lord Jesus had a mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, this is not the way in which He is regarded in the Gospel of John. There is a deeper thing here in question. The fact is that all through this Gospel the people are viewed as utterly gone from God, and as only part of a vast system in opposition to the Father: so completely are all regarded as hopelessly evil and enemies. As the Father had sent Him into the world, "even so I also sent them into the world."

But in order yet more to effect this work of setting apart unto the Father, the Lord adds another and a most weighty truth: "For their sakes I sanctify [or set apart] myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." That is, the Father's word (blessed as it is, and changing all as it does for us) is not enough. We want a personal object in order to bind our affections to it. Who could that object be but one—the Lord Jesus himself? But it is the Lord Jesus not on earth. Jews will have the blessed revelation of the

Lord here below: I do not say how far or how long; but they will have it. They will have the promised One making Himself known to them here below. His feet, as we know, shall stand on the Mount of Olives. But it is not there or thus that we know Him. How then? As He is now in the presence of the Father in heaven. This is the meaning of His setting Himself apart. It is not the victim upon the cross. There God made Him sin, instead of His sanctifying Himself. There it was the substitute forsaken of God that we who believe might never be. Not that Jesus, even when made sin, was one whit less but infinitely more the object of God the Father's delight, and in that most solemn judgment even morally a deeper, yes the deepest, delight to the Father. But still it was most true and real that He was made sin upon the cross in this sense, that He identified Himself thoroughly and without reserve with all the consequences of our evil, and suffered accordingly at God's hand against whom the evil was wrought and whom He came to glorify. The cross certainly was no mere appearance but a reality, whatever might be the vain show of the world wherein it stood. Weaken the reality of His suffering, and the reality of your redemption is gone. Weaken the reality of His suffering, and the reality of the glorifying of God is gone—which is a much more important thing than your salvation or mine. Brethren, all was met there and settled for ever. All evil was there taken on Himself, who was judged for it. There was nothing so foul but Jesus suffered for it; there was no sin so dark but He washed it away with His precious blood. The consequence is that there, and there alone, can either God Himself rest with satisfaction when He

looks at a sinner, or a sinful soul find the rest that his awakened conscience needs. But this is a wholly different thing from our Lord setting Himself apart or sanctifying Himself for our sins, "that they might be sanctified through the truth." It is the Lord Jesus who enters into an entirely new place for man—a place essential in order that there should be Christians in deed and in truth. For the essence of a Christian is that, although he is upon earth, he is heavenly; and how could he become heavenly unless by the revelation of a heavenly man who is his life? And who is or could be that heavenly man but the man Christ Jesus, who, after having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, takes this new place there, Head of a new family, and is so revealed to us by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven?

This then is the force of our Lord's added words. Instead of only giving us that fulness of truth in the Father's word, more particularly the New Testament, but at the same time so affecting all the Old as to give us distinctly and positively a means of knowing the Father in every part of scripture, He gives us Himself as a personal object before us in order that we may have the truth thus. Besides having thus the detailed word of the Father, we want an object to attach our hearts to; we need it that we be not lost in the abundance of the revelations of God. Here then is One who can claim every affection, who can detach us by the revelation of Himself, the worthiest of all objects, an object worthy of God the Father, and surely of us the children who delight in what He delights in. This is none other than Christ, but it is Christ after all the evil was judged, after all the good was won, after love had

nothing to do, nay, even righteousness no other task but to bless us. This is what God now can afford to do as the Father: this is what He is now doing through the infinite sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. But this is what He now reveals, through the Lord Jesus in His presence, and by the Holy Ghost sent down gives us to know. Hence therefore our Lord's taking His place at the right hand of God is not a bare fact in Christianity, an incident be it ever so great and glorious, but barren of fruit. Far from it: His setting Himself apart at God's right hand is a root of divine truth, yea, the root of our distinctive blessedness. He is there the model man according to whom the Spirit forms us by the truth. It is thus essential in order that He fitly and fully should be the means of that wondrous display of truth and love that God looks to be reproduced in those that are Christ's below.

This then is the further intimation in the words, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." We require the Father's word; but we require the person thus set apart in heaven, and in this order too. For the Father's truth that is made known in the New Testament invariably precedes our full appreciation of the Lord Jesus at His right hand, thus sanctifying Himself that we might be sanctified through the truth. But then, (need we say it?) when we have seen the Lord Jesus there, when we appreciate the all-importance of having Him as an object before our souls entirely outside the world, according to which the Holy Ghost is carrying us on and fashioning us while we are here below, the truth is everywhere made more personal and in power. Not that the truth abides not in the word, but that it is thus

applied with increase of blessing. As He says here, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," but not stopping at this, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Thus we see, if we begin with the truth and rise to see the personal place of the Lord, the truth only receives more and more power and point through it.

Turning now to some of the chief scriptures of the New Testament that touch on sanctification, we shall find fresh developments no doubt, but all of them making good the same great truth, whatever the special application to need.

Almost every epistle furnishes evidence. "To all that be in Rome, called to be *saints*," or rather saints called; "to them that are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus," saints called, that is, in Corinth; "all the *saints* in all Achaia;" "to the *saints* which are in Ephesus;" "to all the *saints* in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi;" "to the *saints* and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse;" "unto all the *holy* brethren," speaking of Thessalonica. Here there can be no doubt to any simple, not to say intelligent, mind. It is the description of persons set apart to God; and this too from the beginning of His work in their souls as Christians. The word in no way speaks of their measure or practical attainment of knowledge: it supposes that they were set apart to God as His own children in this world from the outset of their career after their calling, but it says no more.

But this truth, elementary as it is, was far too much for Christendom to carry uncorrupted. Nor do I speak only of the grossness of Babylon, which canonizes *her* saints years after death, and actually not till alleged proofs are given of miracles from relics of the deceased candidate. But even where the pope is rejected, what

can be more timid, what more unscriptural, than the unwillingness of most believers now to recognise each other as saints, and to confess themselves sanctified in Christ Jesus from the starting-point of their confession of the Lord's name? What is this but an unworthy shrinking both from accrediting the rich grace of God and the solemn responsibility of the believer? Saints they are however; and as such they are bound to walk. Not to own it is not exuberance of humility, but only ignorant unbelief to the dishonour of the Lord and their own souls' great loss. It is clear as light from the scriptures adduced that all who confessed Christ were called and treated as saints, and that sanctification is viewed as attached to every one who bore His name. They were set apart to God; and this from the first. (Compare Acts ix. 13, xx. 32, xxvi. 18.)

Again, in 1 Cor. i. 30 we find another reference, without taking up every one, for this would be beyond the limits of the present discourse. But here the apostle says, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." There I think that the Spirit of God uses "sanctification" in a very large sense, not only for the separating us from the first unto our God and Father through the Lord Jesus the Son, but also looking at the separative power as going on practically in our souls to the last. It is very general, and this is my reason for citing it, as I believe that this two-fold application is contained in it and meant. "Wisdom" is in contrast with the philosophy of men that particularly prevailed among the Greeks to whom he was writing; "righteousness" as setting aside all that was imperfect, and communicated in grace where

moral consistency with God was absolutely wanting to man as such; "sanctification" not only from the first call but going on all through; and "redemption" completing the work of grace; for it is not here redemption through Christ's blood but that of the body, as I gather from its place as winding all up. This again illustrates the largeness of the term "sanctification." As it is clear that redemption is meant in the fullest sense, so I suppose is "sanctification" too.

But when we come to chapter vi. we have something a little more precise in verse 11: "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." No theologian writing in the nineteenth century would ever think of putting these words in any such order. They have missed the truth therefore. And let me say further that no man writing in any century whatever would have ever chosen the same form of words except one inspired of God. But have we learnt the wisdom of it? Have we discovered why these words are not only true, but more true in this order than in any other? Certainly the verse does not regard sanctification as only the practical application of the truth to the conscience by the Spirit of God after one is justified, which is the general sense among Protestants; still less does it confound sanctification with justification as Romanists do.

It is manifest therefore that, assuming the apostle's words to be the vehicle of divine truth perfectly expressed, the notion which limits sanctification to the practical process which goes on in the soul after justification is altogether defective. It is not the view that the apostle gives here for our instruction. Is it meant then to weaken the value and need of that prac-

tical work, of growth in holiness, after we believe and are justified? Far from it. I admit its importance and that it is rightly styled sanctification, being our continual setting apart to God every day and in each detail. But I maintain that there is more truth which man does not so easily let into his own thoughts and judgment, and that an element is wanting to give Christians a fuller and clearer understanding of their relation to God.

First of all is it not plain that the apostle Paul here tells these Corinthians that (whatever they might have been in vileness before they knew the Lord Jesus) when they received Him, they were washed? It is very possible there may be some allusion to their baptism as an outward sign of it. I am not discussing this; but I affirm that washing is not the same thing as sanctifying, and that sanctifying is, as all admit, a different thing from justifying. But further, as all these express necessary parts of Christian salvation, are they not all right as God has written them here? The Corinthian believers are said to have been "washed," because the first action of the word of God on a guilty soul is to deal with his impurity—to detect, judge, and remove the evil that defiles. "Washing" by the word (Ephes. v.) is not sanctifying, though in the closest way associated with it; God's grace thereby takes notice of and deals with that which is altogether contrary to Himself. "Sanctifying" is more positively and exclusively occupied with the good to which the soul is set apart. There is a separating object to which the affections are attached, not merely a cleansing from our natural evil.

Although we may distinguish between the washing

and the sanctifying, in point of fact they cannot be separated in the soul of him that comes under the quickening power of God.* But still God is wise in the order in which He puts the thoughts and words. The washing, I repeat, is the application of the word of God by the Holy Ghost to the conscience. Christ, thus received in truth, gives the sinner to detect and judge his evil before God. He is born of God; but the effect of the new birth is that he feels what he himself is. There is repentance in short. But, besides, sanctifying goes farther by the revelation of an object that wins and draws out the heart towards that object. It is plain therefore that the washing supposes more the removal of defilement; and that the sanctifying is rather the effect of the object revealed, which commands the heart, and attracts it from all else, set apart to itself.

This then is the way in which the Spirit of God presents the matter. But there is a third expression—justifying; and it is clear that to be justified is here put after and not before sanctification. In the order in which the Spirit of God puts them, it follows washing and sanctification. How is it possible to reconcile this with the view which limits the doctrine of sancti-

* So in Ephes. v. 27 we read that Christ gave Himself for the church that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious, having no spot or wrinkle or any of such things, but that it might be holy and blameless. The English Version might, and no doubt does confuse, by putting it as "sanctify and cleanse." The cleansing or purifying by the washing of water by the word is the way by which Christ sanctifies the church. The object here is to state the work in itself, not to distinguish the initiatory setting apart from the progressive work.

fication to the practical holiness of a Christian after he is already justified? Impossible! Is the apostle's statement then to be given up as unintelligible? Are we not to have the truth of God as to this received and enjoyed by our souls? The truth is, that not only "sanctified" in John xvii. is proved by our Lord's use of it to have other and larger meaning than men usually assign to it, but the way in which the Spirit of God, through the apostle, uses it has a force quite different from its bare application to the practical condition or growth of the soul after the Lord is known.

I will refer to one other scripture, in order to shew that this is no arbitrary thought, but that the Spirit of God has designed it in the most distinct manner. The very same side of the truth is revealed by another apostle. In 1 Peter i. 2 we are told that the Christian Jews who were scattered about Asia Minor were elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. It is clear that what is called "justified" in 1 Cor. vi. answers to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus here. If the common view were meant, the way in which the apostle Peter would have expressed himself would have been somewhat of this sort—that these Christian Jews were elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, after which the Spirit carried on the work of sanctification in their souls. But He makes, at the very least, a totally different statement. He says here, "Elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." In short, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is supposed necessarily to be in virtue of sanctification; for they were

sanctified by the Spirit in order to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.*

In what sense then is sanctification meant here? This is the real question. What does the Spirit of God mean either by Paul saying, "sanctified, justified;" or by Peter saying, "through (ἐν) sanctification of [the] Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus Christ"? Put before "justified" in 1 Cor. vi., and before the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus in 1 Peter i. 2, "sanctification" in these passages must needs take in the work of the Holy Spirit from the time that the soul is quickened to desire after God, to look up because of Jesus, distrusting itself, yet daring only to hope for good. Perhaps the soul does not yet know what provision grace has made; but it knows enough mercy in God to make it willing to bow to His judgment of all that it has been and all that it has done. Hence it cleaves to Him, and is perfectly sure that all goodness is in Him, trusting that His grace through the Lord Jesus will yet shine upon it; but it does not yet know how richly that grace has sought it out, and wrought for it even before its awakening. The Spirit of God produces a desire to do the will of God at all cost, and testifies before such a soul the work of the Lord Jesus in its infinite efficacy before God. Then and thus it is brought to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; but as it was elect before the Holy Spirit began to work effectually, so the Spirit was effectually at work before the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

There is, it seems plain, an allusion to Old Testament figures or facts in the language of Peter, which was calculated to impress the believing Jews with a lively sense

* See Appendix.

of their new position as compared with the nation of old. For an Israelite could scarce avoid recalling *Exod.* xxiv. 7, 8, when Moses "took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that Jehovah hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words." Now here we have the same elements in their case: obedience of the law and sprinkling of the blood of the victims offered at that solemn moment. But how great the contrast! Israel stood pledged to obey the law and sprinkled with the blood which declared death the penalty of its infraction. The Christian is partaker of the life of Christ which lives in obedience, the obedience of a son, even as Christ was its perfect expression; and he is sprinkled with His blood, which declares that he himself is perfectly cleansed from his sins before God.

That effectual work of the Holy Spirit from first to last is called in the scriptures "sanctification of the Spirit." It embraces the entire setting apart of the soul to God from the beginning onwards. Quickening looks on the soul as being dead in trespasses and sins. There is a new life given it from God; but the effect of divine life is that the heart goes out towards the God that gives it. Sanctifying always supposes the affections drawn out towards Him who thus confers His blessing. The depth and fulness of the blessing may be imperfectly known yet, but nevertheless He is believed in who alone can bless. It may be but the conviction that in the Father's house there is bread enough and to spare, with the assurance of happiness if one could

only get there. The soul is quite sure that mercy is there, though not yet looking when there to be more than a hired servant. Still the confidence of the heart is in the love that is there if one can only get there; and so he sets out. Such is the effect: behold a quickened soul. Without the Spirit there had been no such turning of the prodigal's heart to the Father; no real sense and confession of having sinned against heaven and in His sight. This action of the Spirit was immediate and vital. From the moment that self-judgment was produced, and the affections of the heart turned towards the Father and His house, there is sanctification of the Spirit. It is only when he meets the Father and learns the killing of the fatted calf with the ring and the shoes and the best robe—it is only then that he is doctrinally what may be called “justified.” Justified is the application by faith of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to the person who is already in the true sense of scripture sanctified by the Spirit.

Of course practical holiness mainly follows justification; and with such a view I have not the smallest quarrel. I do not in the least mean to raise any question or attack any person or party on that subject. It is an important truth in its own place that the progressive work of holiness proceeds after we are justified. But what is sanctification of the Spirit before we are justified? And why is it that theologians or preachers never say a word about this? Why is it thus left out? Not certainly to do honour to scripture; nor through intelligence in the truth of God. How comes it to be thus ignored in Christendom at the present moment, and for seventeen centuries before it? If it be not so treated, where among the divines ancient or modern can we find its

expression? Who can say? I do not know, and I do not believe that anybody else does. The fact is that this truth has, in a way absolutely unaccountable save to such as have learnt the defection of Christendom from the faith, fairly dropped out of the schools of theology.

What should we gather from this, my brethren? The blessedness of having the scriptures. For this is no recondite truth; it is not something that might be lost without any particular detriment to the soul. There are immense practical consequences which result from losing sight of sanctification of the Spirit from the point of view in which both Paul and Peter treat it. I am speaking now not of what may be called relative or progressive sanctification, or whatever growth in practical holiness may be styled in theology; I leave all that as it is. Those terms may be more or less correct, but I pass them by without the smallest debate or arresting ourselves upon that question. For my own part I believe that they express substantially the truth, and I have no controversy with Arminian, Calvinist, or anybody else about the matter.

But I must demand of these Christians and you, whether it is not a most extraordinary and suggestive fact, that one of the primary truths for every soul that fears God, one of the most capital truths of the New Testament, should have thus practically become a cipher to most of God's own children up to this present time? If I be mistaken in such a thought, let me be shown the evidence; for indeed I should take it as a very great kindness if any one do me the favour of pointing out where I have in some way overlooked it; but I can honestly say that, after searching in vain yet examining carefully, I believe that what has been said

is the simple truth, (and a solemn truth it is,) that sanctification of the Spirit, in the most important sense in which the New Testament presents it, is a truth wholly wanting—an “unknown quantity”—to most Christians at the present moment.

And what is the result practically for souls? Much every way. But this is obvious that there are those in whom the Spirit of God has wrought, who are often tried and miserable. Then not the Father's word but the law is brought in as a rule for them, and they are thus made still more wretched; for it never was the intention of God by the law to make any sinful man happy. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” How could it do aught for any child of Adam but enslave, condemn, and kill? (See 2 Cor. iii.) Further, the law, as it does not give power, so it never reveals an object. The law has a most important use: but its use is to convict the guilty soul. As the apostle expressly teaches, its lawful use is not for the righteous but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane. It is the strength of sin, not of holiness, the precise reverse of a sanctifying power. The Father's grace reveals to us the most blessed object that even He has; and His word makes His object to be our object. This sanctifies. “Sanctify them by thy word. Thy word is truth. . . . For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth.”

Besides this, which gives us the full character of Christian sanctification right through the believer's course, “sanctification of the Spirit” takes in the first effectual working of the Holy Ghost in every soul that is born of God, from the earliest real effect of the Spirit of God by a life that is given in opening the heart

more or less (for it may be often hindered, and is often in bondage), nevertheless with affections turned to God. In such a case how frequently the soul is pining after the assurance of being sanctified! If a person could know himself sanctified already, what a relief it would be! It is exactly in that condition that many a person, conscious of his unworthiness, is cast down immensely, because he is deeply conscious that, whatever the grace of the Lord Jesus, at any rate he is not sanctified himself. What a comfort it would be for such a soul to know that it is precisely what he is in a sense still more absolute than the practical measure which occupies his mind—to be thrown off self on Christ!

But there is a further thing. While God does meet a soul tried, cast down, and without ability to take full comfort and peace through faith in the Lord Jesus, even though already sanctified, He does not allow one to settle down in that condition. Here is where the importance of Peter's word comes in: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." And why obedience first? This often is no small difficulty, and sometimes leads persons to a sad perversion of the word. They acknowledge that as believers they are called to obey; but are apt to think that, if we fail to obey, the blood of Christ becomes the resource, and makes up all deficiencies. There is hardly any one, it is to be hoped, in this room so uninstructed in the mind of God as to treat the scriptures thus lightly, not to say offensively. No, my brethren, the apostle meant no such thing; but this,—that when the Spirit of God thus separates a soul from the world, the first movement of the soul when turned really and

truly to God from sin and Satan, the great and prime desire of the heart thenceforward is to obey, while the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus assures of cleansing from guilt in the sight of God. "Lord," said Saul of Tarsus, when he was smitten down, "what wilt thou have me to do?" I know there are those who say that this was rather legal. From such thoughts I wholly differ. I grant you there was not yet known the full liberty of the gospel; but, as far as it went, the desire was excellent and blessed. It is the instinctive yearning of the new nature to do the will of God.

But we have far more here. We are told that the measure of the obedience of the elect soul now sanctified by the Spirit is the obedience of Jesus; for His name, I believe, qualifies both the obedience and the blood sprinkled. It is not the obedience of a Jew, but in contrast with it. Such is the point of the words "Jesus Christ" introduced at the end. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by sanctification of the Spirit unto [the] obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus Christ." The English words are a little changed to give the full force. The obedience was Christ's obedience, as the blood was His blood. And is not the first desire of the awakened soul to obey? But God has no obedience now that He values, except that kind of obedience which Jesus rendered. It is not obeying the law, as a Jew might do, in the hope of certain blessings, or from fear of certain curses. The Lord never obeyed on this principle; He always obeyed out of the consciousness of a Son—the Son—of God; and the simplest Christian ought to obey from a similar consciousness too; for we too by grace are children of God; and our God and Father has implanted this in us as the first

feeling of the new life—to do His will. This it is you may see in many that are born of God, and that, even though not in liberty, and alas! too often imbued with doctrine that injures the soul, they nevertheless delight in His will. Their hearts desire to be faithful and obedient. They only want the bright fulness and freedom of the grace of God to clear them out of these imperfect and sometimes erroneous thoughts.

This then is what I believe the Spirit of God here meant. The sanctification of the Spirit is “unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.” It is in contrast with the Jew saying presumptuously, “All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient,” and in consequence of this, having himself as well as the book sprinkled with the blood of the offerings, which threatened death in case of disobeying the law; for this was the sense of the blood with which the book of the covenant and the people were sprinkled. It was not at all the blood of atonement to secure them, but blood sanctioning the law and their own obligations, so as to keep before them the death that they must die if they failed. The apostle Peter appears to me to have all this in view: only the change is complete for the Christian, who begins, not with the book of law, but with the Saviour; and what he finds in the Saviour is both a **spring of life**, by which he desires to obey God, and also **accomplished redemption**, by which he starts with his sins **effaced** and forgiven before God. Thus, instead of having the blood of victims to tell him he must die if he fails, he **has** the blood of the Saviour to assure him that all is clear because he is thereby washed from his sins. And the redemption is eternal no less than the life in Christ.

I trust, therefore, that in these few scriptures compared with what has come before us somewhat more at length in John xvi. the nature of Christian sanctification has been shown clearly. Its full character and means the Lord Jesus first gave us to see. This the epistles follow up, developing the order and place of sanctification, or the setting apart of the soul to God, as compared with His other dealings in grace. Christ looked at its full import right through, while the passages in the epistles we have examined take up its beginning, so to speak, in the heart. At the same time both of course are divinely true, and each of all possible importance; but both differ not a little, unless I am greatly mistaken, from popular thought even among the children of God. I have been anxious therefore to set forth, as far as God has enabled me, the testimony of scripture to this most momentous truth.

There are other scriptures that refer to practical sanctification, on which I must say a word next. One clear text of this description is in Hebrews xii., where the apostle says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness" (or sanctification, if you please) "without which no man shall see the Lord." It is evident that this is practical holiness. He is addressing those whom he assumes to be Christians. There might be persons among them in danger of going back, as we know there had been. Some had already been apostates; but the apostle was "persuaded better things of them, and things that accompanied salvation, though he thus spoke." But here he says, "Follow peace with all men." They had already peace with God; but they were told to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." There is

nothing really harsh in that, nor a word to cause the smallest difficulty to the most sensitive spirit; for surely, my brethren, there is no Christian who would affirm or allow that a man can live as he lists and yet go to heaven. Can a person sin habitually and be born of God? Surely the language of St. John is even stronger where it is laid down that "he that is born of God doth not commit sin." No doubt, as you justly plead, he means the person so characterised, not that a believer may not fail in this particular or in that, but that no man who is really born of God lives without exercised conscience and holy ways before God: no man so born goes on in sin, but walks according to the new nature. There are differences of measure, and various degrees of spiritual power as we know; but all saints have an uniform desire, and the Lord hearkens to that desire and answers it too,—meeting and helping the soul, sometimes by the comfort of the truth, sometimes by sharp discipline, but in one way and another strengthening it to please Himself. It is manifest from this that there is not the slightest ground for explaining away such an exhortation, no excuse for trying to make out that "holiness" here means what we are made in Christ. This is not the thought in the smallest degree. It is only deceiving ourselves if any think so.

Again, in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians it is clearly a question of practice. "This is the will of God, our sanctification." "For God hath not called us to uncleanness but in holiness" or sanctification. Here it is plain that he is speaking of walking in holiness every day. And then again he prays that the God of peace Himself sanctify them wholly, and that their spirit, soul, and body should be preserved blameless at the

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In all he is looking at the practical work that goes on in the believer.

I particularly mention these passages; for we ought never, in asserting one side of the truth, to forget another. Only what has been already said proves that, besides the practical holiness of which we have been last treating, the New Testament speaks pointedly and plainly of the separating power of the Spirit of God in every man's soul who is born of God, and from its rudiments calls it "sanctification of the Spirit." From the first motion of divine life in the soul right through, all that time a man is sanctified; and this one may call absolute or personal sanctification, in order to distinguish it from what came next, that is, relative sanctification, which depends upon spiritual growth, submission to God, use of means, as the word of God, prayer, fasting, self-judgment, discipline. All these things help on the soul's practical growth in holiness.

Again, we must notice briefly such passages as Acts xx. 32, xxvi. 18. It is impossible to apply these to progress in holiness but to the character and estate of all Christians. The structure of the word *ἡγιασμένοι* admits of no other meaning. Is it argued that this is only the condition of believers when they have arrived at the end of their course, if not of the world altogether? Rom. xv. 16 and 1 Cor. i. 2 refute such a restriction; still more forcibly does Heb. x. 10. This is not at all weakened by the form of the word (*ἀγιαζόμενοι*) in verse 14, as in chap. ii. 11. For the present participle may be used abstractedly apart from the question of the action or the passion. But the perfect tense could not be used as it is in verse 10 about the same persons at the same time, if the object were to define by

ἀγιαζόμενοι that we are only under a process of sanctifying now going on, but as yet imperfect. For while the present may express either the actual time or the abstract character and object of the operation, the perfect necessarily gives the permanent result of a terminated action, and therefore affirms that we have been and are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. It is no question of God's counsel respecting us, but of a present abiding effect of Christ's finished work. Hence to lay stress on *ἀγιαζόμενοι* as if it must needs indicate a process going on is not only arbitrary, because the present participle does not always convey this force, but even negatived by *ἡγιασμένοι* which decides the time and excludes what is imperfect. It is not potentiality, but a present fact and a continuous character acquired by Christians through the accomplished and accepted sacrifice of Christ. To translate therefore in verse 14 *τοὺς ἀγιαζομένους* as "them who are being sanctified" is, under the appearance of literal precision, to prove that we have never seen the true spirit of the passage, and that we do not understand the apostle's doctrine on this great head; and the rather too as *τετελείωκεν* ("he hath perfected") in the same clause is irreconcilable with this effort to get rid of sanctification here as a standing condition, by denying the abstract force of the present participle as used in this case. It is interesting to observe that in the same chapter (ver. 29) the Spirit employs the aorist *ἡγιάσθη* to describe him who had once been a baptized confessor of Christ crucified but afterwards turned out an apostate. That tense simply states the fact historically; whereas the perfect, adding to it the idea of an existing result, could not properly be used of one who spurned Christ

and counted the blood of the covenant a common thing. It is not true that he had advanced so far in the spiritual life that this blood had been applied by faith, or that its hallowing or purifying effects were visible in his life. Such talk is merely imaginative, not only without scripture, but neglecting the obvious intimation of that which is said; for the passage says nothing of spiritual life, or of applying the blood by faith, or of purifying effects visible or invisible, but only of sinning wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth. Be it ever so exact and full, this in no way implies in itself a divine work in the conscience so that the person was born again and converted to God, but such a clear full and certain knowledge as many unconverted men possess who nevertheless hold fast the truth in unrighteousness. Very different is the statement in Heb. ix. 14 where the blood of Christ is said to purify the conscience from dead works in order to serve (*i.e.* religiously) the true God. Had there been any such language in chap. x. used of the renegade's previous state, there would have been a scriptural basis for the idea of some; as it is, in what is really said here and in what is said not here but in chap. ix. 14 is a twofold testimony of the most distinct kind against it. Heb. xiii. 12 seems too general to decide the question before us in either way; but there is ample light where the language is strict to gather the sense with certainty.

These then are the two main senses in which "sanctification" is used of believers; for I do not here go into the setting apart of the Son by the Father (John x. 36), nor of praying that the Father's name be hallowed (Matt. xi. 9; Luke xi. 2), nor of the relation of marriage with a believer (1 Cor. vii. 14), nor of food

no longer taken in mere nature but set apart for godly use of the faithful. The first is what the apostles Paul and Peter have laid down, where, as we have observed, sanctification is expressly shown to be before justification. To apply this to the practical work would destroy all truth: there can be no proper Christian holiness of heart and ways before the soul is justified. Tridentine doctrine is ignorance of scripture: "to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Since therefore both emphatically introduce it before justification, it is plain that the "sanctification" of the Spirit intended has another sense than the practical one; and that it means the setting apart in principle to God which is true of the believer from first to last. So it is used in 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Sanctification of the Spirit" evidently here accompanies "belief of the truth," and this "from the beginning." It is not growth in holiness afterwards. Yet assuredly growth comes when the soul, finding rest in the work of Christ, identifies itself by the working of the Spirit practically with Christ as an object before the heart. "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" or sanctification. Hence "being now made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting

life." There it is and thus that the Christian enters into what the Lord Jesus set out so fully, which, as we have seen, contemplates Christian sanctification and its specific means without drawing attention to time one way or the other. Its object is a deeper one, shewing that we are set apart unto the Father according to what was revealed by His word and in the Son on high. "We all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed unto the same image from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit."

May the Lord then grant that this rich and grave subject may be estimated better,—a subject so easily obscured to the loss of the children of God, and so easily forgotten to the injury not only of those that are beginning their career (depriving them of the comfort of the knowledge that they are sanctified), but also of those that may be longest in the way. May they be continually stimulated, knowing that if they are thus sanctified, they are called on to walk according to no less a measure than Christ revealed by the Father's word. May they profit not by fragments of the truth only, but by the whole revelation of God, acting by the power of the Spirit of God in renewed affections, ever judged, ever deepened, by these divine communications, but also concentrated on the person of the Lord Jesus. May He give us thus to prove more and more how precious it is that we are sanctified by the Father's word, and that the Son has set Himself apart for our sakes that we might be according to such a model. Amen.

APPENDIX

ON 1 PETER i. 2.

It may help souls if I give a few proofs, not from persons of extreme views, but from the most intelligent among the Reformers, of their looseness on this subject and their divergence from scriptural truth. It is needless to speak of Romanists; for they are too stupefied by tradition to afford the least hope of finding real and intelligent subjection to the teaching of the apostles.

The plainest conceivable instance of the way in which popular error works may be seen in the following extract from Beza's Version and Annotations. I quote from the latest edition (1598) during his life, where his thoughts are given most fully and correctly. "*Electis ex præcognitione Dei Patris ad sanctificationem Spiritus, per obedientiam et asperisionem sanguinis Jesu Christi.*" Such is his version: of the note this will suffice. "*Ita complexus fuerit Petrus omnes proprias salutis nostræ causas quæ a Deo manant, nempe efficientem summam causam, Dei Patris præscitiam, id est decretum æternum: Formalem, vocationem efficacem, quam electionis nomine intelligit: (nam ut alibi diximus, tum demum re ipsa eligimur quum Deus æternum suum decretum in nobis per vocationem exequitur) Finem, sanctificationem electorum: Materiam ipsam, Christi justitiam, cujus imputatione justi coronamur.*"

First his version is as unfaithful as one can imagine. He not only departs from the necessary force of the apostle's words in two most weighty particulars, but inverts the propositions employed so as to alter completely the revealed mind of the Spirit. It is true that in one of these errors the Vulgate had led the way; for it is impossible fairly to render *ἐν ἀγιασμῷ* by "in sanctificationem." Beza should

have been rather warned by such a flaw, especially as Erasmus from the first had correctly given "per sanctificationem," as none could justify the taking *ἐν* and *ἐς* as both = "in" with the accusative. But Beza allowed his system of doctrine so completely to warp his mind that he proceeded to the still greater error of representing *ἐς* by "per," a rendering which not only falsifies the meaning but has not the smallest shadow of justification from the Greek idiom in any work of any author from Homer down to the fall of Constantinople. And, secondly, this bold and excessive perversion is the foundation of his comment; which, being wholly unfounded, calls for no remark further than that it is just the common notion on the subject. For, spite of the English Bible, which is in the main right, people continue to fancy that the Lord means here that the Christian is elect according to God the Father's foreknowledge unto sanctification of the Spirit by the obedience of Christ and the sprinkling of His blood.

Much more right was his leader, J. Calvin, though he speaks hypothetically. "If there be parts or effects of sanctification, then sanctification is to be taken here somewhat differently from what it means when used by Paul; that is, more generally. God then sanctifies us by an effectual calling; and this is done when we are renewed to an obedience to his righteousness, and when we are sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and thus are cleansed from our sins." Even he is mistaken in thinking that Paul does not use sanctification in this more general way, as I have shewn on 1 Cor. vi. 11. But plainly the Genevese chief owns a sense of sanctification different from that which is ordinarily seen and admitted. 2 Thess. ii. 13 appears to me another clear witness of Calvin's limiting this more general usage to Peter. For there the apostle speaks of God's having chosen the Thessalonian saints from the beginning unto salvation by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. It was in virtue of the Spirit's setting them apart and their faith in the truth of the

gospel that God thus chose them to salvation : doctrine strikingly in analogy with the statement of Peter, if we allow for the difference in presenting the thought to Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Again, the excellent Archbishop Leighton, in his well-known Commentary upon the first Epistle of Peter, is perplexed by this obedience. He rejects Beza's application to Christ's obedience actively (though he took it as His obedience unto the death of the cross); and he himself thinks that it is contained in (*yea*, chiefly understood to signify) that obedience which the Apostle in Romans i. calls the *obedience of faith*, by which the doctrine of Christ is received, and so Christ Himself. When he adds that "by *obedience* sanctification is here intimated," it appears to me that he gets confused by not holding fast the more general sense of sanctification. The apostle certainly treats of obedience in this place as flowing from the setting apart to God or sanctification which precedes it. Besides, I think he mistakes the nature of the obedience by understanding it as the obedience of faith when a soul receives the gospel. In my judgment the phrase means that we are thus set apart to obey as Christ did, in the consciousness of our sonship, and with the assurance of being purged by blood. Much more correctly does he say later (Works, vol. i. pp. 15, 16, Jerment's edition) that "*sanctification* in a narrow sense, as distinguished from *justification*, signifieth the inherent holiness of a Christian, or his being inclined and enabled to obedience mentioned in this verse; but it is here more large, and is co-extended with the whole work of renovation, and is the separating of men to God by His Holy Spirit, drawing them unto Him; and so it comprehends justification (as here) and the first working of faith, by which the soul is justified through its apprehending and applying the righteousness of Jesus Christ."

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, [let us wait] on [our] ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. xii. 6-8).

I HAVE purposely taken a scripture in an epistle familiar to us all, where we have gifts brought into prominence which were not on one hand for mere signs to the world, nor on the other that character of foundation gift which was limited to the earliest days of the church of God upon the earth. At least no apostles are specially named among the gifts of our chapter. Thus it is evident that our list differs on both sides (whether looking at the world as the sphere of God’s remarkable manifestations of power, or looking at the church as requiring what was special in order to its first establishment on the earth); and this because of a design here different from that of 1 Cor. xii. or of Eph. iv. We have what is called the ordinary ministry required for the good of the saints, rather than the manifestation of God’s power in man by the Spirit in witness of the risen Lord, or of Christ’s love

to His body in its fulness, and in principle too till the completeness of His work on the earth. From the choice of such a scripture every one will see that my object is a practical one. It is to search simply and honestly, as in the sight of God, into the true nature of Christian ministry,—of ministry such as we need to know it and to have it freely exercised in our midst,—such as we ought to acknowledge, if we are to be found faithful as the children of God in presence of so great a blessing.

You will see therefore, that it is here assumed—as, I trust, unnecessary to be proved particularly now—that Christian ministry is a permanent institution. It is agreed that Christian ministry, not in all its forms, but in substance and in its essential nature as it was given from the beginning, was not intended to be withdrawn till the close of God's work here below as now known in Christianity. We are not going to enter into curious questions as to what preceded Christianity, nor to occupy ourselves with anything that is to follow after Christianity has accomplished its mighty task. For the present I hold myself, and would direct your attention, to that which is connected with our constant place of privilege and duty every day. As this will greatly simplify the subject, so at the same time it is quite evident that it concerns every Christian.

I define Christian ministry, then, to be, according to the word of God, the exercise of a spiritual gift. Ministry in the word is the exercise of a gift which has the word for its subject-matter. It may embrace, no doubt, different spheres, but it brings the word of

God to bear upon souls, whether converted or unconverted. Confessedly, when we look at the converted, ministry has by no means the same simple character as the gospel addressed to the unconverted. If then Christian ministry in the word be divided into two great departments, namely, towards the world on the one hand, and towards the church or Christian body on the other, it is clear that, whereas towards the world it is really summed up in evangelizing or proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God towards men, towards the church it is a more varied and complex matter. Here we must leave room for distinctions of very great importance.

That these are the two greater departments of ministry in the word, few Christians will be disposed to question, or to require proofs at length. The thing is all but self-evident. Thus the word of God is perfectly plain as to evangelizing. Our Lord Jesus, before He left the world, directed His servants to preach the gospel to every creature. He told them to go and make disciples of all nations—the Gentiles, “baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” He bid them proclaim repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. He charged them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all the creation. Is it not evident that this was ministry to those without, and that it has for its aim the making known the name of God, as now fully revealed in Christianity, and the glad news of redemption to every creature whom they could reach? Accordingly, among the most prominent of His servants, are seen the

apostles themselves. Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost to the thousands that gathered after the astonishing sign was shown of the sending down the Holy Ghost from heaven. This arrested universal attention : men flocked to know what this wonder was ; and the apostle Peter explained all from the Jewish Prophets and Psalms. But he did more. He preached the glad tidings. He showed them the way to be saved ; he set forth Jesus as the one and only possible means for a sinful man, and then of course, to men of Judea and of Israel. He was addressing such as had gathered at that time to the great feast of Pentecost—strangers from every nation under heaven, but still Jews ; to whom he set forth Jesus as the Messiah (above all His death and cross, resurrection and ascension) made Lord and Christ ; for all these and more are brought before us in one way or another, and are substantially the same great truth of His rejection by Israel and His exaltation by God, though it is quite admitted that the whole subject is testimony to Jesus and hence of far larger bearing than simply the way for a sinner to be brought to God.

In preaching we should avoid too nice distinctions. It is wise to be direct, simple, and thorough, in affectionately pressing with solemn earnestness the broad facts of Christ and redemption. It may be all well among the children of God to point out the various lights and shades in the truth of God ; but, in my judgment, refinement in evangelizing spoils the message of Divine grace. As God is simple in His dealing with souls, so should we be as servants, not seeking to please men or ourselves. The same apostle

Paul, who was inspired to lead into all the heights and depths of God's counsels and ways, when helping on the children of God, appears in the Acts of the Apostles, coming down to a gospel of such simplicity as many preachers would hardly think of giving out. He takes his stand on the facts of Christ, His death and resurrection; but he also takes care to meet them exactly where they were, where for instance he cites the rain from heaven and fruitful seasons as witnesses of God's goodness, against degrading and selfish demon-gods, even when all the nations were suffered to go their own ways. These suffice to tell of His beneficence who now sent them the glad tidings of Jesus. For we are not to suppose that we have all reported, but some special point urged in divine wisdom: the wants of a sinner's heart cannot be met by rain from heaven; nor can a soul now, still less in view of God and eternity, be satisfied by present goodness in this world, however rich. Nevertheless it is wholesome and important to note how the apostle takes up the poor heathen, and presents to them (from what was before their eyes, or in their own consciousness) testimony to a power infinitely superior to the creature. To a heathen, who had not the written word, the analogy of God's care for the body was no mean argument from which to proceed to tell the love of God to the soul, and thus the whole story of Divine grace. To my mind there is no less wisdom than simplicity in such a method, which we might do well to cultivate.

The same apostle Paul, speaking to the Jews, does not enter into the question of the outward creation, or the

nature of man here below, forgetful of his truest dignity (Acts xiv. xvii., end). He takes them up to the Old Testament (Acts xiii. xvii., beginning), shows them the Messiah, His death, resurrection, and kingdom, required by the positive word of God with which they were so familiar, and then compares the facts of the life and death of the Lord Jesus, as the only answer to what the Law and the Psalms and the Prophets prepare us for. All this clearly shows the singleness of purpose, and consequently the union of depth and plainness in the presentation found in scripture. For it is a mistake to suppose that those most profoundly taught are necessarily the hardest to understand. The reverse was true in the apostle's case.

When people are imperfectly instructed, they are apt to be in a cloud both of thought and words ; and often fancy that, because they are scarcely intelligible, they must be very deep. The truth is that, where there is the certainty of the known truth, you can afford to be simple ; and where there is adequate power to give out as the rule, so the hearers will find it. There will be real depth according to spiritual power and acquaintance with God. It is inconceivable, when one enters really into what God is, as revealed in the glorious person of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and His work and His position, that there will not come out what is of God above the thoughts of flesh and blood. Ordinarily however, the greater the intimacy with God, the more will there be simplicity with man ; and although simplicity can very well cohere with depth, we must remember that depth is a very different thing from obscurity.

Now the apostles were not muddy, but perspicuous and plain. Their manner was direct, personal, positive.

They had before their souls the most momentous truth from God for man, and this distinctly seen. They had the deepest conviction of man's ruin and of God's grace; they had before their eyes in the fullest and the clearest light who Jesus is and what the Rejected of men did and suffered in atonement, and what God could, would, and did work, through Christ the Lord, for poor sinners. This formed the staple of their teaching. This is the gospel. This is the glad tidings of a Saviour, and more particularly of Him displayed in the mightiest work, the only one indeed, which could at all, which does fully, meet the sinner's wants, namely the work of redemption.

But this clears the way at once. There is first of all the ministry of the gospel, next there is the ministry of the church. But when we come to look at the ministry of the church, there are many different kinds of it. Take for instance what we have in the verses read. "Having, then, gifts differing," as it is said, "according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith, or ministry, [let us engage] in ministry, or he that teacheth, in teaching; or he that exhorteth, in exhortation. He that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity (or, liberality); he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."

Any thoughtful mind will see that this is not at all the way in which man would have written of Christian ministry. Is it too much to say that not a single individual in all the world would of himself have written as the apostle has done here? If so, do you think that this was not meant to instruct us? Is it not a notable

fact, while he introduces that which no one could dispute to be of the highest character of Christian ministry (for instance, prophesying), that at the same time he brings in exhortation; and again he mingles with this a kind of ministry which has nothing directly to do with public instruction in the word, while nevertheless, it is emphatically called "ministry;" and again he adds to them, yet distinct from all, ruling or taking the lead. Many Christians seem to be greatly afraid of ruling. They are jealous lest its admission might compromise what they consider the scriptural principles of Christians. They would do better to sink every principle which cannot face the word of God. They would do better simply and fully to trust what God has given and revealed. Be assured that the Lord knows how to keep up principles for us far better than we for Him. He classes ruling along with the other forms of ministry. This should be enough for the believer. It is in no way bound up with an authority which does not exist any longer.

But there is another matter to which I call your attention. Giving is a kind of ministry that is often deficient, not receiving, but giving. Again, it is another gift to show mercy. They are both admirable kinds of ministry. At the same time they are not assuredly the forms of ministry that men would have joined with prophesying and ruling: nobody would have thought of such an association. What are we then to infer from all? This at least, I think, that God is much larger, simpler, more real, than we are—that He counts as a part of the wondrous work that He is carrying on in the church a great many services that we

do not call ministry and have not in general regarded as any gifts at all. Ought we not then to be guided in these things by God's word?

This brings me to an important principle that I desire to press and always hold fast as well as to urge on others; that ministry is not any mere qualification which we have naturally—that no ability that any man can have is what constitutes the force of ministry. Ministry always depends on a positive gift from the Lord. Do I mean then, by this, to set aside natural abilities or acquired qualifications, more particularly since we have been Christians? In no wise. It is an equal error to confound gift with qualification, and to deny that qualification is of any consequence to gift. Let us believe both, but maintain, according to the word of God, that gift is entirely in itself distinct from those qualities which nevertheless may be necessary for the due working of the gift. The Lord has Himself set this forth in a remarkable parable (Matthew xxv. 14-30), which may be referred to for a moment, because the matter is put with such decision that it is hard to see how any one can fairly evade its force. We learn thence that Christ was as a man travelling in a far country who called his own servants and delivered to them his goods. It is not merely God in His condescension making use of *our* goods, which is also quite true. He knows well that the Lord does so. But this is not the point of the parable. The Lord delivered to these servants *His* goods. This was when He went up to heaven. For His country, according to the style of Matthew's Gospel, is the land of Israel. He is regarded as Jehovah-Messiah from chapter i. Palestine therefore was His land. Accordingly

heaven, in the point of view of this Gospel, is the far country. Going away, then, He delivered them His goods, "and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one,—to every man according to his several ability." Two things are here evidently distinct. The ability of the servants is recognised in its place, but the goods of Christ are still more manifest on the other side. In short the Lord does not give the same kind of gift to different servants. Who ever yet saw two men that had the same? Far from fighting with these differences, it seems to me in beautiful harmony with Christianity, and has immense practical importance. Every servant of the Lord has a gift suitable to his own ability; and hence, as the ability of servants differs, so also does the gift. Thus, even though for instance the Lord might give the gift of evangelizing to many, as He does, they do not receive it in the same form or measure. Every evangelist has his own line of work, according to his peculiar gift, in presenting the truth. Is this a matter to find fault with? Much rather should we thank God for it. Miserable is the ministry of one man following another. I grant you it is the constant tendency of narrow minds. They have got an ideal before them, such as it is—good, bad, or indifferent—some favourite of theirs by whom each is judged, and to whom they would like every one else to be conformed. Their norm for the church and for those who minister would be to resemble a regiment of soldiers, of the same height, or as nearly the same as possible, and with the self-same dress and drill. But this is sadly discordant from the will of the Lord, who gives in no case the same gift in mode or degree, but

to each as He will. The right working of Christ's ministry depends on this—"Having then gifts *differing*," followed by its different forms. And this is so true, that, even though the gifts may be to the same end, yet take any one of them—evangelists, pastors, teachers,—and it will be found that they have each their own individuality as servants of the Lord. They have each their own ability, to which grace adapts the gift of the Lord Jesus; for His gift is evidently suitable to the particular vessel in which it is placed. This serves a weighty purpose of God in the church, on which I may touch a little more when we come to see how it has been abused and perverted. For thus man always tends, under every possible circumstance, to trench upon, and hinder, and spoil the blessed work the Spirit of God would carry on for the glory of Christ. Let it suffice to point out the broad principle at the present.

It has been shown, then, that gift is not to be confounded with ability; that ability is not to be denied because of gift; that the two things are perfectly consistent; and that our Lord Himself is the authority for both. Our Lord intimates that He gives His goods according to the several abilities of the servants. We shall find there is more than this, important guard as it is against both unbelief and fanaticism; but we must reserve each for its own place.

This, then, is the first element I desire to press as to ministry in the word, that there are "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us." It is not therefore according to the education of the man, or the will of others. Popes and patrons, prelates and congregations, have no voice in scripture as to ministry

in the word. Its title is directly and immediately derived from One immeasurably above them all. As to the source of the gift, everything depends upon the Giver. This is of immense moment. The gift comes from Christ—from Christ alone—not from the church in part, any more than wholly. Nor should the church presume to sanction formally what comes from the Lord Christ, as if He needed her countersign.

But further, this principle decides its place in another way; for, properly speaking, Christian ministry began with Christ's ascending up to heaven. He designated apostles while He was upon the earth; He sent out seventy persons with a last message to Israel; but the same New Testament which tells us these facts declares that, when He ascended up on high, He gave gifts. Both facts are true; they are not to be arrayed one against another, which is what infidelity does, though sometimes well-meaning ignorance does so too. But if we do not know, we should seek to learn; for ignorance in divine things often exposes souls to the assaults and influence of infidelity. Though far from being the same thing, we should bear in mind that ignorance of the mind of God does expose to the inroads of the enemy, who takes advantage of it.

However this may be, we see what a place Christian ministry has. It began when Christ had done with the earth, consequent on the accomplishment of redemption. He had come down to the earth, but it was to test man. A man, He lived among men here below, manifesting the Father in the midst of darkness; but it too surely proved that man would not have Him—yea, hated both Him and the Father. The end of that

was the cross. Risen from the dead, He acts in power—not merely in testimony, but efficaciously; and this too, not only in power over the body, but in full delivering energy, first for the soul, by and by for the body, conforming it to Himself in the glory of resurrection. Meanwhile, exalted above, He works by the Spirit of God sent down to maintain His glory and give effect to His grace. In the practical working out of this He gives gifts as He will, and these constitute the ground of true Christian ministry. When He rose from the dead, He commenced a new thing; as it is said—"Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." At the right hand of God He inaugurates an entirely new work, and in connection with this work He provides a fresh and suited instrumentality. The operation of this instrumentality is Christian ministry.

The first part of this service of the Lord is His dealing with men by the word, gaining their attention, and drawing them out of the world to God, through His name; but then, when souls are converted, by much the greater part of Christian work remains to be done. They are quickened indeed, but only brought within the threshold of divine blessing. It is not that one doubts or slights the reality of this blessing. God forbid that we should disparage the new birth! They have Christ as their life; but how much they have to learn of Him whom they now possess! Hence the main work of Christian ministry in the church is to lead those converted into a deepening practical acquaintance with Christ and delight in Him and His glory, into the application of the truth (found only in its fulness in Him) to all the difficulties as well as to

all duties and the energetic purposes of His love, while we are passing through this world. Hence the need of various forms for the due fulfilment of Christian ministry; as we see in the passage read.

The apostle begins with prophecy. It is indeed the highest character of instruction from God. It is not necessarily predictive. Prophets do predict, but this is not what constitutes prophecy. On the other hand, it is a great mistake to suppose that prophesying is merely edifying men in a general way. Prophesying does edify men in the most important way; but the verse to which I have referred in chap. xiv. of the 1st Corinthians is not a definition of prophesying but a description; that is, it does not tell us what prophesying is, and nothing else; but it describes what prophesying is as compared and contrasted with speaking in a tongue. To speak in a tongue does not edify people, but prophesying does. Yet there are many who might edify without prophesying. He surely edifies who strengthens souls by holding up Christ and making His love better known; and so does he who exhorts or teaches well. But none of these things is prophesying, which means that character of truth which puts the conscience of a man in the presence of God, which gives the soul the certainty that His mind is in that which is uttered, stripping and laying bare thoughts, motives, feelings, everything. Such is prophecy. There may be what approaches it, no doubt, elsewhere; but this is its proper force. In that same chapter (1 Cor. xiv.) we see the proof. Going into a Christian assembly, where they were talking with tongues, a stranger might think they were mad. What a reproof to the Corinthians! In

very childish spirit they were reasoning after some such human way as this: "If God has given us tongues, we ought to use them: but there is no place so important as the Christian assembly; therefore tongues should be used in the Christian assembly." One thought of Christ, one right feeling about the church, would have preserved them from that mistake. How did the talking with tongues promote the glory of the Lord Christ in the assembly? How did it edify those that came together in the name of the Lord? Not in the smallest degree: consequently, had there been singleness of eye in thinking of Christ and those that were Christ's, they never would have thought of it. They went astray owing to the commonest source of error: they were thinking of themselves and of their own importance. Having the gift of tongues, they thought they were to use them because they wished it. Who could forbid them? Did not the gift come from God? Thus, we see, it was independence of action, not perhaps without human arguments as to their duty, but without the express word of God, or even that instinctive sense of truth which requires a certain spirituality to apply aright. They were walking like men, and even children; they were carnal, not spiritual; they were reasoning instead of believing. All was wrong.

This led the apostle to suppose another case. Let a person come to the assembly, and hear them, not talking in a tongue that nobody could understand, but prophesying; and what a different result! Then all the secrets of the heart would be revealed, and the effect upon the unlearned person, or even the un-

believer, would be, that he would fall down on his face and feel that God was in them of a truth. In this case his conscience would have met God through the word thus brought to bear on him.

We must remember that in those days the Christians were surrounded by the heathen and the Jew; the one brought up in the follies of many gods and many lords, even below the consciences of man, instead of above them; the other accustomed to the driest and coldest possible moralizing on the law and the prophets. What a change it was for them to see the true God brought into contact with the heart of man and his conscience! The effect was immense on them, more particularly on the poor Gentile. Accordingly such an one fairly broke down prostrate before the living and true God who thus dealt with the secrets of his heart. But this shows us the true nature of prophesying. It was not predicting something that would have to be waited for, to see whether it would come to pass: this is not the prophesying the apostle means. Prophesying applies to the future in peculiar circumstances. Not that one looks for such a character of it now: I do not believe that a person predicting things now would be in the order of the action of the Holy Spirit, for the simple reason, that the predictions of importance for God and for man are already given in the written word. But there remains the other sense of it,—namely, the bringing out the truth of God so as to deal with man's conscience, and give him the full conviction that it is God who is speaking to him by man. I see no reason to doubt that God still vouchsafes this—in feeble measure perhaps, and in rare

cases ; but still, that the principle of it is true I cannot doubt, and that it will not fail as long as God has work and testimony on the earth.

But next we find what is called here "ministry;" and by ministry I apprehend is meant serving the saints—kindly, loving, self-denying interest in their difficulties, snares, sorrows, wants, and trials. It is not preaching nor teaching, but helping the saints otherwise. This is set down as a real gift. Do you not feel and know that there are those who teach admirably, to whom you would not think of going if in any strait? I am sure there are not a few who can preach and teach too, yet do not possess that kind of spiritual power needed to advise in case of any trouble or difficulty. It is part of the fallen state of the church to concentrate all in one ; as on the other hand there is no disrespect if one simply own each according to what is given from above. Scripture alone gives the certain truth, and sanctions the right man for the right place.

Is it asked how the reality of these gifts can be known? May there not be mistakes through vanity on the side of some claiming beyond their measure, or through the pride of those who disown and thwart what eclipses their self-importance? I answer that all that is good in divine things is by the Holy Spirit, by whom God decides for us these difficulties. Undoubtedly prejudices may hinder for a time ; but those who know God can trust Him to make known how He would have us serve the Lord, or to whom we should look for loving succour in things too hard for us. Power of the Spirit in any way proves itself ; especially where souls are habituated to test all by the word of God, as the

Christian and church always should. Were there no such person as the Holy Ghost in the Christian and in the assembly, the difficulty would be insuperable; and the objection has weight in exact proportion to the objector's unbelief in the real presence and gracious guidance of the Spirit, alas! the characteristic sin of Christendom. But the Spirit is here to care for the saints of God, to draw them out in worship and to direct them in service. Does He fail in this? Never where faith is at work. That unbelief cannot see how these things can be, is but natural. It is His function to glorify the Lord in all, but especially as regards public testimony by those to whom He has given special gifts for the general good.

Gift, then, of whatever kind it may be, is not an official status, nor a name by courtesy, but a real power which Christ gives by the Spirit, and which is made good in practice, as conscience guided by the written word will own; and this is just as true in "the ministry" or service of the saints, as in prophesying or any thing else. The chief difference is, that "ministry" in this sense may not be a public gift at all, whereas prophesying in the case of man is, of course. Those engaged in preaching and teaching may also have this gift of "ministry." I am persuaded some have it in a very eminent manner; but it is well always to give the fullest breadth to gift, and to give the utmost value to what one does not possess oneself. Grace delights in honouring others. And, be assured, this the Lord would have us cultivate somewhat more. It is always happy when those who themselves preach or teach are earnest in maintaining the place and value of those

who do not, and when those who have other gifts, such as serving or ruling, stand up for those who teach or preach. "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body."

It is in this way that God works for welding all together by His Spirit. His is no system of classes, each jealous of another. All that was found abundantly in heathenism, if not in Judaism; but it is not so in Christianity. There are "gifts differing," and each servant of Christ should maintain those of others, trusting the Lord as to his own; for there can be no course less worthy than for a Christian minister to be contending for himself under the plea of Christ's honour. For sometimes excellent men fail in this, through a mistaken notion of not allowing the Lord's gift to be despised.

This is all well; but am I the right one to see to it in my own case? or should I strive to stir up others on my behalf?

It is clear that there is always plenty of evil going on; but as a rule, true wisdom, if you are ill-used, is quietly to bow, and, if you must, to fight the Lord's battles, confiding in Him to espouse your cause, but in no case to fight your own battles. You may have

done so ; perhaps we have all done so ; but have we not learnt, if so, that the route is cheerless, and that not thus can we gain the victory that shines to the praise of Jesus in His day ? Your defence provokes aggression, and, as long as you defend yourself, you will have, not one only, but many, who will for this reason suspect and oppose you.

Such is human nature, and the children of God are not free from its effects. The path of faith gives deliverance from these difficulties, though it has its own, in which the Lord shows the sufficiency of His grace. Therefore leave these matters with Him. Our business is to fight His battles, not our own—to look at the things of others, which are really of Jesus Christ, and not our own.

Hence we return to the great theme now before us. “ Having, then, gifts differing ” does not mean valuing our own gifts, or of those who accept particular views on given points of an external character—the surest sign of a party spirit. In the church of God, in order to faith’s full blessing, the Lord gives gifts various in measure, and differing in kind and aim. Hence the plain duty of all the saints, and more particularly of His servants, is to take care that there is nothing on their part, and nothing sanctioned by the saints in this or that servant, that would hinder the free and full operation of whatever the Lord has given for the church’s good ; for if He gives, it is ours to receive, and, as we value His love and authority, to receive all in their place, as He has set each in the assembly. This is the ground of ministry, and the true principle on which depends its due working to His glory.

But every reflecting Christian will observe how this clears the way immensely. The church of God is neither the source nor the channel of ministry. Without speaking of the monstrous sin of accepting the world's interference, or accrediting a mere sect, which of course, like the world, can only give an authority within its own circumscribed limits (for sects, like nations, are mutually jealous, and only recognise each other by courtesy), the right of the Lord—the free action of His service in grace throughout the entire assembly of God—is ignored by both, and as impossible to be heeded in sects as in the world.

But supposing you look now at the brightest and fairest scene that God ever made on this earth—namely, His own church, the body of Christ—it is most certain that ministry never did find its source or authorization in the church, but from the Lord Jesus acting by the Spirit; and this can be readily proved by the word of God. It is a truth indeed of capital importance, yet little seen and less acted on, but indispensable to every saint, and above all to every one who serves the Lord in the word.

First of all, then, it is clear, according to the scripture already referred to (Eph. iv.), that ministerial gift is attributed to Christ as the Giver. If it be said that Christ is away, I answer, that this was true when Christian ministry began. There is no essential change in this; for although, before proper Christianity was seen among men, the Lord had chosen apostles and others, like the seventy messengers sent throughout Israel, we must remember that they had an exclusively Jewish mission before He (Christ) went to

heaven. They were Messianic envoys, who testified of the kingdom only, not of redemption by His blood, still less of Christian standing or the assembly of God ; and their testimony was armed with peculiar powers, revoked before He suffered (Luke xxii. 36).

But my subject to-night is not Jewish but Christian ministry, which followed on Jesus taking His place on high, as Lord of all and Head of the church. Ascended on high, He gave gifts unto men. Those first named are no doubt the most important : He gave some apostles. So great is the change, that previous appointment is quite passed by ; even the apostles are set on new and heavenly ground. But He gave some prophets also, either distinct from apostles as here, or associated with them in the foundation of the new building, when the same term was met with. Then we hear of some He gave as evangelists ; that is, individuals specially fitted to spread the glad tidings to every creature. Lastly, He gave some pastors and teachers ; that is, such servants of His as were qualified privately as well as publicly to enforce the truth of God, both doctrinal and practical, on His children. The object of all this was "for the perfecting of the saints," with a new ministerial work, with a view to edifying the body of Christ. Thus the proper effect, and the shape taken, are clearly laid down.

This then is plain, and at the same time of weighty consequence ; because we have certainty from the word of God as to the Giver, and the most important kinds of ministry ; but, besides that, as to its aim and object. May we not add too, from the context, the implied perpetuity of Christian ministry, peculiarly expressed

so as not to clash with the constant expectancy of Christ, but enough to comfort faith; for if Christ has given in each case "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," it cannot be suspended—still less terminate and fail—till the whole end is accomplished. Assuredly the Lord dies no more. He died once, and for us, blessed be His name; but this was before He ascended and became Head of the church. He is living at the right hand of God, and, as the unfailing Source of supply, He gives these gifts.

This again is another exceedingly important consideration. To faith it supplies the answer, whatever the questions that arise. Let us conceive the present company to be a true, however faint, representative of the church on earth; and the question to be started by any, How ministry is to be appointed in our midst, and how what is real is to be distinguished from pretension.

Must we not look to the Lord, and search His word? To form our own thoughts and theories is natural, but human, and the way of sure error. Does the Lord leave us without instruction? Certainly not. He who gives the gift (which, when exercised, constitutes Christian ministry), secretly deals with the souls of the saints whom He would build up with His grace and truth, and of the servant who is in a given way stirred up and strengthened of the Holy Ghost to go forth in the work, whatever it may be, to which he is called. How often and how various the exercises and conflicts between heart and conscience; love for the Lord and for souls; fear of one's own nature and perhaps of others!

I remember myself, for instance, a person in whom the beginning of his work in the ministry of the word among the saints was of this sort. Found just in such a company as is here this night, he had strongly enough the word of God laid on his spirit. He was timid ; he did not wish to speak ; he dreaded a mistake about the Lord's will in rising, but he did not like to risk the appearance of forwardness. Was there not pride in this ? He really shrank from what people might say, and consequently kept back. There is sometimes as much of self in cleaving to one's seat, as in too great eagerness to leave it. There may be flesh in both ways—the vanity of coming forward, and the pride that shrinks from being thought vain. Both are wrong. Were there more simple occupation with the Lord, and hearty exercise of love in seeking the good of souls, most of these difficulties would disappear. However he had not the faith to go forward. The meeting proceeded. The very scripture so heavily pressing on his heart was read by another. Then he felt constrained to rise, and ventured to speak out boldly the word of God, who was pleased to carry home the message to the hearts and consciences of the children of God then present. This was used to teach him to confide in the Lord, and with quietness and simplicity to go on in the face of difficulty, opposition, detraction, hindrance—everything which the enemy excites wherever there is a gift from Christ exercised in dependence on Him ; for assuredly he will never leave undisturbed those who are really raised up of God. He may not harass thus where natural or worldly plans reign, but he knows how to sift, thwart, and trouble where Christ is

sought to be served. Thus the fact of such opposition and difficulties ought rather to reassure and cast on the Lord where there is faith to look to Him and His word.

But it may be asked, "May not believers be mistaken?" Certainly; but where simply gathered to the name of the Lord, and instructed in the word of God, it is rather a critical experiment for an individual to get up and minister. Vanity and pride may be found everywhere, and are always evil; but assuredly of all places it is hardest to speak where the word of God is really weighed and intelligently applied. He who has not something from God is pretty sure to be found out there; and, if there is Christian plain dealing in love, he is sure to be discouraged. Not that it is right or gracious to be hard on any man in such circumstances. Indeed it always strikes one as deplorable to hear of the readiness of some to bear hard on the comparatively young and the ardent, still more on older men who have been under less favourable conditions for knowledge and free service. It seems to me an altogether mistaken line of criticism to be sharp on worthy labourers who could know little, and at the same time to be timid enough in presence of mistakes in those who ought to know more and better. Where persons have somewhat of experience, they might be expected to have patience; and where thoroughly grounded in the scripture, they can afford to hear all the difficulties and bear that which would be severe and crushing to young men. It is beneath the dignity of those matured in the mind of God, to be oversensitive with such as are apt to have their stumbling-blocks, prejudices, and objections. Bear in mind as to

this the language of the great apostle. The first sign of an apostle Paul puts forward is "in all patience." If that was a goodly index of one extraordinarily sent by Christ, I am sure for other reasons it ought to be the accompaniment of a true minister everywhere. The more you have the consciousness of the Lord putting you forward, and being with you in the work, no matter what may be the form of your ministry, the more be encouraged to bear with the froward, to compassionate the ignorant, to help all that need it. The more you are assured of the truth and of the Spirit's power, the more you can put up with that which would be otherwise trying. This is plain, that, if not simple in faith and strong in the Lord, you will in the same ratio be touchy, which is anything but a badge of Christ's service. It is well to bear this in mind, for things are sadly changed in this as elsewhere. The church of God is not a place for avoiding difficulties, or displaying what we know and would make known. Ministry in the church, whatever is of God, whatever is holy, true, and good, must be fully tried, so as to put men to the proof. To faith this is just one of the privileges which the Lord turns to His own glory and the very great blessing of those who cleave to His name.

But this at once shows us that the idea of being what is called "educated for the ministry," or taking it up because one happens to be a fluent speaker, is vain. I do not mean to say that as a question of ability this may not have its value in its own sphere. It is admitted that, if ability is not forgotten by our Lord, His gift is required in order to real ministry. So true is this, that we may easily see, not only men in the world, but

Christians in the church, possessed of considerable ability but having no gift whatever in the word. You may all have known such, as I have; persons of admirable knowledge of scripture but without spiritual power to enforce or explain the word of God in a proper manner to others; if they attempted it, they would fall into confusion and make mistakes, or at best the word would be powerless for good. Even if what they said were pellucid as water and free from error, there would be no power in it,—nothing to bring Christ before the heart, or to exercise the conscience before God. It is evident that such speaking is not ministry. It may be a pleasing discourse, but not Christ applied to souls. Ministry means far more than a Christian speaking truly on scripture; it is the exercise of a positive gift from Christ; and what He gives has for its effect, either to bring souls to God out of the world, when they pass from death unto life, or to nourish and direct the life which is already given.

This leads also to another thing. It may be asked, Do we not find in the church of God, according to the account scripture gives of it, that there was a certain form or method of initiation—a public induction of gifted men—into the ministry? There are certainly many men of godly feeling who think much of what is called “ordination,” appeal confidently to Scripture for it, and think it is a very serious wrong or defect where it seems slighted or at least absent. Many where they least expect it can appreciate their difficulty. Some of us here can remember the time when we had equally strong prejudices on this head. Confessedly it is a duty to examine scripture thoroughly, and to cleave to it at

all cost. It is allowed also that the word of God is quite plain about it.

First of all, as to preaching the gospel, none can dispute that, when persecution broke up the church in Jerusalem, all good Christian men went about evangelizing the world (Acts viii.). This ought to settle the question as to principle. It is not only that they scattered and went everywhere, but that scripture proves they were sanctioned and blessed—that the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. It is in vain to allege in the face of Acts xi. 19–21 that the action then was irregular and owing to peculiar circumstances. It might have been hoped that those who plead for antiquity and order would show more respect for that which had the sanction of the primitive church, of one not behind the chief of the apostles, yea of God. For let it be remembered that all this was in the earliest days of holy order, if ever there were such, and of power in the Spirit, if ever this was known in man here below. These were days when truth was proclaimed by holy apostles and prophets; what can be more harsh than to imply a departure from due order sanctioned of the Lord at such a time? The truth is, that the objection is human, and that the collision of scriptural precedent is with an order set up, not by apostles, but by the fathers in the dark days of declension which too soon set in, when through the craft of the enemy another sort of order undermined that of the Holy Spirit, when pretentious form was substituted for power, when Ignatius, and Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria supplanted the apostles, and

utter departure from the grace and truth of Christ ensued far and wide.

But it is only fair to weigh those scriptures which are commonly quoted against freedom of preaching and teaching, always bearing in mind that the question is exclusively one, not of spiritual competency, but of liberty to minister among those assumed to be competent.

One of the passages chiefly insisted on is the beginning of Acts xiii. There it is alleged that even Saul of Tarsus, the apostle of the Gentiles, himself submitted to the rite of ordination. He and Barnabas, it is said, were then ordained at Antioch. Were there any real ground for this, the case would be closed. But the passage disproves that for which men produce it. There was no ordination whatever. Look at it well : the truth has nothing to fear. If it were the revealed will of the Lord for every preacher or teacher to be ordained, the right course would be clear ; for one must expect His gracious wisdom would make due provision for giving effect to His will among those who fear and love His name and word. Were the common practice of Christendom sound, it is certainly an easy matter anywhere to get ordained. It nowhere requires learning, and a little piety suffices the very few bodies which require it. Few trades or professions need so short an apprenticeship, so little ability, such slender acquirements ; and the mass of clergy, from Rome to Geneva, from Canterbury to the Primitive Methodist Conference, consist of men springing from a comparatively humble position in life. Ordination therefore, if scripturally requisite for all preachers and teachers, is by no means of difficult attainment in itself or in its conditions. The natural heart

likes it; for it prevails among Catholics and Protestants; and Mormons or Moravians as rigidly insist on it as Papists or Presbyterians. Quakers make much of their elders, and Congregationalists of their ministers. In short, search Christendom through, and all have in some shape their ordination, and hence their clergy, of which they think no small things. The question is—Is it of God? How far Acts xiii. sanctions it, we shall see when the account is examined.

“Now there were at Antioch in the church that was [there] prophets and teachers; both * Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

Is this what men think to be ordination? What are the facts, as compared with the inspired history? Barnabas had been ministering in the word for years before this. So had Saul of Tarsus, as we learn from his own account in Gal. i. Compare Acts ix. 20–29. Afterwards for a year together Barnabas and Saul were gathered together in the church at this same city of Antioch, where they taught much people. Thus, not only Barnabas, but he who was an apostle by the call of the Lord Jesus, preached freely among Gentiles as well as Jews, and taught particularly in that assembly

* The best authorities omit *times* “certain”; and there is no authority whatever for the insertion of “as” in the Authorised Version. Thus the vague impression is removed, that there were other teachers there unnamed. There were really three besides Barnabas and Saul.

and city where, a considerable time after, we are told (but not by God) that they received orders at the hands of their ecclesiastical inferiors. Is this even reasonable?

But this leads us to another point of importance. We have Paul's own inspired answer to the argument. He distinctly pronounces upon the question; for from the first there were not wanting those that found fault with him because he had not been appointed by men,—that is, ordained. As to the twelve apostles, every one knew that the Lord Jesus had either formally or virtually appointed them (formally as to the eleven, virtually as to the twelfth); but there were men of that day who shook their heads as to Saul of Tarsus. Of course he said he was an apostle by divine call, and spoke of the wonderful vision that he had seen outside Damascus; yet nobody saw it but himself, they sagely remarked, and who then could be absolutely sure? Very mysterious man, this Saul, who had suddenly leaped from a persecutor to be an apostle. His teaching too was strikingly different from every one's else, even the other apostles'. Thus doubters appeared among the early Christians, who were stumbled at his immediate call, irrespective of those before him; and these men were difficult to convince about the matter. Hence in an inspired epistle, and this the most solemn in its form that he ever wrote, Paul told the Galatians that he was an apostle not of men neither by man. He denied that humanity was either its source or its channel. This statement destroys the argument from top to bottom. Ordination, in the common popular sense, must mean that the channel, if not the source, of the ministry in question is human. The apostle for

himself denies it as to both. He insists in precise terms, that he was an apostle "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." That is, when God stopped him on the road to Damascus, when the Lord Jesus appeared and told him then that he was a chosen vessel, he was appointed or constituted His apostle from that day. This is what he lets us know, and exactly what he acted on. In the same epistle he says, "When it pleased him who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." What did he do then? Go up to Jerusalem to get his orders from the apostles? Not at all. "Immediately," says he, "I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem."

But was it then to be ordained? No; but to visit Cephas, with whom he stayed fifteen days. "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." And so strongly does he feel on this head that he adds, "now, the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." He was conscious that, for him and others too, the truth he preached was bound up with his ministry; and as the truth he taught was the development of what the grace of God gives, not only in the death and resurrection, but characteristically the exaltation of Christ in heaven, so his ministry had a heavenly source, not earthly, still less human. Expressly to harmonize with the divine

counsels as to Christ and the church, the ministry of the apostle Paul knew no human channel, and not even as its source Christ Himself on earth—for this also it is of importance to affirm. There are many pious souls who acknowledge God as the source of ministry; but then, as they say, for the sake of order man must be its channel. The apostle takes pains to deny the latter no less firmly than the former.

Further this is not to be regarded as an unfruitful exceptional circumstance. It intimates a principle thenceforward to be seen at work in the service of the ascended Christ the Lord. It is vain to say that it does not concern others; for he was an apostle, and had a miraculous vision. And why then did you venture to argue on his alleged ordination (Acts xiii.)? If you take the ground of treating the apostle Paul as furnishing no instruction for ministry now, why do you throw dust into people's eyes by the insinuation that there was real ordination in his entrance on ministry. The truth is, that you are as wrong in your alleged facts as in denying their bearing on our practice. Saul and Barnabas had been preaching to those without, and they had also been instructing those within, before this pretended ordination, the fact and principle of which is excluded by Galatians i. 1., as far as Paul is concerned, in every shape, degree, or aim. Has the erroneous use, has the truth, no voice for us all?

Do you ask, "Why then were Barnabas and Saul separated?" It was of the Spirit who was now distinctly sending them on an unprecedented errand among the Gentiles, though regularly even then "to the Jew first." In this it was important to have the

sympathy and prayers of their fellow-labourers. Supposing some one here were marked out in some way adequate, as God knows how to make it to our consciences, to an untrodden field surrounded by peculiar difficulties, such as Tartary or the interior of China, with the danger of ever-present death for the truth's sake, —would it not be a becoming thing, in those circumstances, that those who had faith in God and fellowship with the work should get together, and with prayer and fasting lay their hands on the head of him that was going out, not pretending to make him anything that he was not before, but rather identifying themselves with this errand of love? The known and ancient sign of identification was the laying on of hands. It was so in the case of sacrifices; so too in conferring a blessing on a child, or a gift on one designated for it like Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6), in praying for a sick person, or in appointing any to a charge like the seven curators of the poor in Acts vi., where the task was exclusively external, though some had also a spiritual gift in the word. It was always on the part of some one presumed to be connected with the source of the blessing, who by that outward sign indicated his desire that God would impart it to him who was its object.

Observe that elders are never said to have had hands laid on them, though it is probable from 1 Tim. v. 22, and from general use, that imposition of hands may have accompanied the choice of them by apostles and apostolic delegates. But scripture seems purposely silent, as if to warn against making a form of it, *there* at any rate it can claim no sure inspired warrant.

The case of Acts xiii., then, could not be one of ordi-

nation ; for what is the meaning of this rite ? In the generally understood sense among godly men (for I do not speak of vulgar superstition among Romanists or the like) it is this : the Christian may have the power from God (or the gift) for a certain work of a ministerial sort ; but he has not thereby title to act, till those who have the authority from the church ordain him, investing him with a proper ministerial character according to the prescribed degree or position he is to occupy. There are differences ; but this is the broad notion, divested of abuses and irregularities which abound here as elsewhere.

What a strange disorder, yea, inversion of things, to interpret the scripture so as to involve the conclusion that Paul and Barnabas, two apostles, got their orders from Christians, who were not only not apostles, but in gift, position, and every other respect, inferior to themselves ! Is it thus they would prove a valid ordination ? Who will pretend to say that, if ordination was meant, any could be thus chosen in a legitimate manner ? Even in the world superior officers of government are never appointed by the inferior, unless in a republic. Government ordinarily and properly descends from the higher authority to the lower. Such is the picture according to the word of God ; and it always will be so unless where and as the spirit of revolution upsets it. But such is the order most certainly in divine things. Accordingly, wherever in scripture the question of ordination comes up, a subordinate office is conferred by functionaries of higher grade. Where were such here ? The advocates of ordination are in danger of repeating the error of Paul's adversaries, in denying his full apostolic authority,

through deriving it from men, and men of subordinate place. Scripture assigns to Paul an apostleship of the highest character and immediately from the Lord.

Thus it is manifest that the attempt to found ordination on Acts xiii. is not only a total failure in every point of view, but strikes a blow at his underived apostleship and his testimony of the truth, as well as at the veracity of God's word. Those who imposed hands on Barnabas and Saul never had their important place; and in fact, before this act they themselves had been teaching the church in Antioch as well as preaching to those without. Evidently they had held the highest place among those that were then labouring there.

My conviction then cannot but be, that the imposition of their fellow-labourers' hands in this case was a most orderly act of interest and of prayerful communion; it was in no wise a pretension to confer an authority which they did not possess. But, if this case fails, there is no other as regards Paul; for it is remarkable that, when first brought to the Lord, it was so ordered that a simple brother laid his hands on him, and then the Holy Ghost was given to him. He who baptized the apostle was not an apostle: else it would have been said that it was one in that high position who gave Paul his authority. As it is, nobody can pretend that Ananias conferred anything of the sort on Paul.

How wise are the ways of God! I remember well reading some years ago a book by a living dignitary of the Anglican establishment, in which he speaks of the absurdity of men in office claiming to be the sole persons to baptize. This he argued from this very case of

Ananias, as well as from Cornelius, etc. He pointed out that it was a layman, as people would call it now-a-days, an unofficial disciple, who was used purposely to baptize and lay hands on the greatest apostle the Lord ever gave to the church. It seems to have been just the same principle on the day of Pentecost; for, although Peter and the rest of the apostles no doubt baptized many, it may be doubted whether only they baptized three thousand in a day. So, when Peter went down to Cæsarea (Acts x.), instead of his baptizing as if it were his sole prerogative, "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." The other brethren—the unofficial brethren that accompanied him—must have baptized on that grave occasion.

Surely, if anything could destroy the notion of baptism having its validity from the authority of the apostle, such a fact is calculated to do so. What clergyman would think of doing this? Peter, then, was not, and could not have been, a clergyman. Suppose one looked, for instance, at an official in any particular religious system, is it conceivable that such a one would delegate his power or authority to these unknown Christian brethren? Especially, would he act thus on a most novel and critical occasion, without such a plea of numbers or necessity of circumstances as might be said of Pentecost? Has anybody ever heard of such a thing since the clergy began? It is not so that men do now. Their thoughts and habits are altogether changed from the truth of God in this matter. Far be it from me to say that the apostles Paul and Peter would have thought lightly of one preaching the word out of his own head, or out of unworthy motives—envy, strife, or covetousness. This would be a gross

evil, but not unknown of old (Phil. i.). But the clerical principle in no case remedies its worst forms, but rather sanctions by legitimating them. Again, ministry does not mean that Christians have a right to preach or teach ; for in truth no man has such a right : the Lord has the right to call and send, as He alone gives the needful gift. It is in this that the true principle is wholly opposed to what men call democratic. For democracy means that all rights flow from man's will. Christianity denies this, root and branch ; it affirms that the right is the Lord's entirely, and that He exercises His right by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Hence the choice is for God's glory ; and one way in which this is secured, is that, by choosing not many wise or learned or mighty or noble, God puts honour on the Crucified One, not on mere circumstances, as position or possession, family-birth, genius, ability, or acquirements. Rather does the Lord in the face of obstacles exercise His sovereign will, so that He gathers, so to speak, out of every sort. To the spiritual mind which delights in honouring the Second man and not the first, what can be more delightful ? In such a state as the present such a choice is precisely the best and wisest possible. What more deplorable than if He chose only from some particular class ? No, such is not the way of the Lord. Inasmuch as the church chiefly consists of the lowly, so is it with the greater part of those that minister. Thanks be to God, none is excluded from His grace or the service of Christ for natural circumstances. Thanks be to God, none is to be supposed fit for the Lord's service because he is learned, or noble, or rich, or anything else

in this world. Let us cast off all unworthy prejudices or prepossessions. We must be simply governed by the word of God and the evident will of our Lord Jesus.

The essential principle of ministry is, then, that, as the power is of the Holy Ghost (only just suited in form to the ability of the man who is called, but distinct from it), so on the other hand it is entirely in the Lord's hand. Therefore the assumption of the church to choose and authorize ministers, or to order their action, is a plain direct infringement of God's word and of Christ's authority. It is no question of any particular body; for I am sorry to think that wherever one looks—from the Pope of Rome down to the humblest pastor—this principle has found footing. A minister is regarded as an official of the system or denomination. There is no such thing in Christendom as a servant of Christ left free to do His will. And the reason is obvious: it would not help on the interests of the sect. He must be a priest of the Romish church, a clergyman of this body, a minister of that, and so on.

My brethren, if you are guided solely by the word and Spirit of God, you cannot fail to see that Christ alone calls and makes one *His* servant. Why should Christ's servant be a servant of man in divine things? Be content to serve Christ alone; you cannot serve two masters, as Christ has warned you. To serve Him only gives singleness of purpose and becoming dignity. This alone puts you in the place of dependence; this produces and sustains the only true and lawful independence. This I hold to be essential to the glory of Christ and our own allegiance to Him. There should assuredly be the freest scope given to that ministry. In the

history and epistles of scripture, never does even an apostle step between the least servant of Christ and his Master.

The evident feeling there is that, as it would be unbecoming for the little gifts to interfere with the greater ones, so it would be still less worthy for the greater ones to absorb or extinguish the less. There is no right sense of Christ's authority, no adequate value for His service, where any of these things are allowed to intrude and hinder. Yet such is the actual state. The apostles were hardly gone before this crop of evil showed itself; for, indeed, the germs were there before.

Take for instance Corinthians iii., already referred to: "I am of Paul, I am of Cephas." There were those who thought that Paul was immeasurably above every one else, as others had a jealousy of all but Peter; others again were swallowed up in Apollos. But what of some who set themselves against the rest, on the plea that we must beware of exalting man, and said "I am of Christ"? I have little doubt that these were the worst of all who thus troubled the church with their fleshly preferences. For the corruption of the best is ever worst; none certainly were flying more directly in the face of Him whom they professed to honour. It was a subtle self-assertion, and none the better because under His name. In vain do they pretend to honour the Master who despise those He has called to serve Him in serving them. In such cases the real object of idolatry is poor and paltry self, and in order to this the enemy suggests the name of the Lord as a convenient cover. For it would never succeed to put self forward: people would reject it of course. But it was a specious self-deceived deceiving to say that for their part they thought

it better to be taught of God and not man ; that, as for these ministers, it was well to beware, for it was evident that they all more or less set aside the congregation of the Lord, not giving sufficient place to their brethren and not owning the lordship of Christ. They counted it therefore more spiritual to look away from them all to Christ exclusively. Such thoughts, brethren, though they may look fair to some, are in my judgment based on the hollowest and falsest principle possible to conceive among Christians. For the express way in which the Lord Jesus is now glorified is by His Spirit here below ; and the Spirit works by the different members of Christ's body to the profit of all. So true is this that I believe it would be a calamity for the church if it had only the ministry of the apostle Paul : and none would have resented this evil narrowness more than the ostensible object of such spurious homage.

Suppose it were possible to have the ministry of Paul, I do not hesitate to say that the church, if it shut itself from all but Paul, would be robbed of no small part of its food and other necessary supplies. Even the great apostle was not the most suited means of conveying all that grace had to communicate. The ministry of the least gift that Christ confers on the church is as necessary in its place as the ministry of the greatest. I maintain, therefore, that it is just as the arms of the body have a place more imposing than the toes, yet you cannot do well without the lower and lesser members for all that. They too have their place ; and if they are wrung or pinched, the whole body suffers not a little. The smallest member, if it gets out of joint or into a bad condition, as we know, may cause excruciating

ating agony to the whole body. So undoubtedly it is with the spiritual body. It is this apostle who gives us the same analogy. The Lord has appointed these things for His own glory, and He is jealous over His own order. There is not much fear as a general rule that the more showy gifts will be despised; for a powerful ministry in the word will ordinarily have admirers, even though to a great extent it be not understood. On the other hand, wherever the Spirit of Christ works in power, there will be no jealousy of lesser lights, but anxious care that they may not be superseded or despised. What can be more happy than when we see men of greater power leaving room for the less; or, again, the least of these walking humbly, and giving the fullest place to those to whom grace has given more than to themselves?

Thus manifestly the church of God, and the ministry of Christ, are expressly intended to be a place not merely for the communication of gifts, but for the exercise of grace and patience, of the mind and the affections of Christ. Nothing keeps but the eye fixed upon His glory. This is God's aim by the Spirit.

Christian ministry is not a means of living for men, however right it may be that the servant should live by the gospel if he have no adequate resources in God's providence. It is a comely thing that those who minister in spiritual things should not only not want for carnal things, but that fruits of loving care and honour should abound even if there be not absolute need; for one could scarce devise a greater humiliation and loss for the church than to be in circumstances where apparently their affections could not be drawn

out. Suppose an assembly where none were needy and only rich men addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints and of the gospel! It were far better for the assembly if the rich moved off, or at least took care not to stifle the activity of love in their poorer brethren. It is a calamity when rich men patronize and saints sink into clients,—a twofold snare, and a permanent dishonour to the Lord. Let the rich seek objects outside the place they live in, that the poorest brother may not be hindered from knowing the acceptance of his mite, and the value of his quota in all that concerns Christ. It is of prime moment that the heart of all, even to the destitute widow or child, be drawn out in active, gracious, intelligent interest and sympathy as to the church or the gospel. Wherever patronage intrudes and is allowed, there will surely be “death in the pot,” and, in the end, disappointment to the patrons, if not the danger of covetousness to the dependents, who will be apt to feel that there is no good reason why they should practise generous self-denial; for wealthier men supply more than is wanted, and why then should the poor contribute? Thus are they taught to count themselves and their offerings of comparatively no moment, whereas grace and wisdom would carefully instil the contrary.

Do not imagine that this is a fanciful picture. I am persuaded that not a little of the kind has too often injured those called “brethren” in some quarters. Occasionally there has been a disposition on the part of men of large means to be lavishly ready and forward in settling everything. They ought to beware and leave room for others—yea, for all. They need not fear for

love. The assembly is one, and many places might well and wisely receive a share of what in their own locality would be almost unalloyed evil. Whatever gives undue importance to wealth is as evil as the slighting of the least member of Christ. Ministry according to the world manages these things, according to Christ it corrects and directs them to His praise.

It is good that those who have the means should use all as faithful stewards, but never so as to stifle love or dignity in the lowliest saint of God. Let us not forget the poor but blessed widow with her two mites. Instead of telling her that it would be more prudent for her to keep the two mites, the rich may learn how poor are their gifts in comparison, and seek to have their hearts drawn out as hers was in devotedness and faith God-ward.

Thus ministry is a large theme, and serves to connect the homeliest matters with the glory of Christ, which casts its bright light over all the details, and alone secures its truest honour.

Christian ministry is spoiled if made a question of present distinction in the world and filthy lucre. And do not let us think of danger for other people only; let us beware for ourselves. There are none exposed to greater perils than those who are brought outside the camp to Christ, bearing His reproach. Not that one has the smallest doubt of the right path for the faithful in the present ruinous state of the church. Scripture leaves no hesitation as to this for those who have confidence in it by the Spirit. At the same time it is a path where a careless foot may trip, where none is exempt from the constant danger of being dragged

to one side or another. The path of Christ needs the hand of Christ to keep one steady in it. The only guiding star is Himself, seen on high, and soon about to come for us. Shut your eyes to that which attracts nature, and unflinchingly carry out what you know to be the revealed will of the Lord. Do not join parties or allow party feeling. There is not a little of this sort which we have to guard against.

Exercised according to the word of God, ministry is an invaluable means of helping souls and keeping things straight. But the true principle, it must be repeated, is this: whatever gift Christ gives, He has given for use. If it be asked on this,—What is to become of gifted women; for surely some of them have such power in the Spirit? I answer that undoubtedly they have gifts, and ought to use them too. It is not intended for a woman, more than a man, to put the light under the bushel. The Lord holds us responsible to profit by and use His gifts. Only we must remember that the woman, not being a man, is to act as becomes a Christian woman. We must not forget that it is no question of privileges in Christ, where there is no difference, but of public action in His name, where we must have His warrant. Now there is a propriety in this, and very strongly is this insisted on, and by true-hearted intelligent souls recognised as in the Bible. Never there do we hear of a woman preaching the gospel. In the East, for women to go forth publicly to proclaim the glad tidings in the crowd would seem utterly wanting in decorum. In the West, men do not require such severe seclusion in females; yet is there a wide gap between the happy liberty they enjoy and the

forgetfulness that they belong to a sex whose best place is the home circle, or that which approximates to it in visiting the sick and poor, the young and old.

It appears to me then, that the thought of women going forward in public to preach the gospel is unknown to scripture, often as we find women employed in delicate, difficult, and extraordinary errands. Not, of course, that women might not freely declare the glad tidings to needy souls, for they clearly ought to tell of Christ diligently, and far and wide; but there are bounds prescribed, and a seemliness which may not be sacrificed. For no otherwise speaks the word of God. Never do we hear of a Christian female preaching to the world.

The question might be raised as to the Christian assembly. Surely, as some think, they may be allowed to speak in the church or congregation of holy men and women, where lawless ways are intolerable, and the Spirit acts freely for Christ's glory. But no, says scripture; this is the very place where they are commanded to be silent. As to the world the question is not even raised; as to the church the question is ruled in the negative by the Holy Spirit.

Scripture does not in the smallest degree supersede the value of woman's service, as well as her seeking the good of souls individually. We know (Acts xxi.) that the four daughters of Philip prophesied. These pious women had the highest character of gift for ministry in the word. Where did they prophesy? Certainly not in the assembly. They probably prophesied in their father's house, which seems a fitting and the fittest place for them. In this case we must remember the principle laid down in 1 Corinthians xi. 3-16. For

1 Corinthians xiv. 34, 35; 1 Timothy ii. 11, 12, are conclusive as to that which has been affirmed; and, undoubtedly, the more you search, so much the more you will find in scripture that every truth falls into its proper place. No one duty destroys another; the word of God is in perfect harmony with itself when really understood. Our haste sometimes, flesh's will always, sets one passage in opposition to another. But the believer does not make haste, and, desiring to do the will of God, knows the truth through grace.

Having but touched upon these important topics, I must not omit to say a word on elders, as it might be thought that the subject was passed by designedly, or at least with negligence. There is not the smallest reason for evading it, inasmuch as the light of scripture enables one to furnish a clear, distinct statement on what is generally misunderstood.

In Christendom elders are habitually confounded with ministers of the word; even Presbyterians, who ought at least to be right in this, make the same mistake here as their neighbours. Hence an elder is never included in any scriptural list of gifts (Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.; Eph. iv.; 1 Pet. iv.). They had a grave and responsible post, but they might never preach. Their business was to lead or rule, exhort and rebuke (1 Tim. iii. 5, v. 17; Tit. i. 9). An elder must be apt to teach, and might have the gift of a teacher; but his position as an elder was something distinct from, and other than, a gift. Whatever may have been the fact among the Jews, where the beginning of eldership is not unveiled to us, it is certain from the Acts of the Apostles (xiv. 23) and the Pastoral Epistles that

elders were by apostolic authority, personally or by delegate, invested with a local charge or an outward authority of rule within a certain circumscribed sphere (*κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ πόλιν*).

In some of the churches of old, as, for instance, Ephesus and Philippi and elsewhere, we hear of elders or bishops, of whom there was always a plurality in the same assembly. They were different names for the same persons and the same thing. The notion of elders or presbyters and bishops being different is mere ignorance or prejudice, if the authority that decides be God's word *in* apostolic times, not tradition *since*. In scripture they are always of the same extent, the same functionary and same function, only with a different name from a different point of view. Hence the comparison of Acts xx. 17 with verse 28 proves not merely, as dishonest controversialists say, that bishops are presbyters, but that presbyters and bishops are identical, which is a widely different statement. I doubt that any Christian teacher who is entitled to be heard on this subject, no matter who or where he may be, if he be only possessed of competent knowledge, would venture to impugn what I am saying on this decisive passage of scripture. It used to be contested by divines of the last and former centuries; but although one may not think much of progress in the nineteenth century, I am glad to say that hardly any one would dispute this now; and I am speaking now even of scholars attached to episcopacy. It is all but universally acknowledged that the elders and bishops of scripture were not two classes, but the selfsame persons and office.

It has been already remarked that they were appointed or chosen by due authority. Persons might ask, "Have you then elders or bishops now?" I answer, No. This however is from no indisposition to receive those whom God raises up, but because none can have elders or bishops without apostolic authority in person or by delegate to appoint them. Hence, if we have not duly chosen elders, *you* have them not one whit more than we. The difference is, that you pretend to what you have not, while we confess the truth.

Nobody at this time has scripturally authenticated elders, not having true apostles to appoint them. You cannot have them because you want the requisite authority for appointing them according to God's word. There are many religious societies which have them in name; but whether it is a gain to have them thus irregularly, without the authority needful to validate them scripturally, judge for yourselves.

We are all familiar with the fact that they have plenty of elders in Scotland, of Established, Free, and I know not how many other sorts. We are at home, too, with the fact that in England they claim to have them, disguised, it is true, under other names; and this not in the national Establishment only, but in the various associations of Nonconformists and even in the Society of Friends. So, too, it is abroad, far off or nearer home.

At the same time I am bold to say that in Scotland as in England, or in any other country, they may be styled presbyters as much as men please, but they are no more presbyters scripturally appointed than the other members of their flock. It is easy enough to call

a person a presbyter ; but it is another thing to recognise them as such according to the word of God. But it is into this we are now inquiring :—What is the truth of eldership according to scripture? not the value of the name when only given by man in a way altogether different from that only rule of divine authority.

There the essential condition of duly constituting one a presbyter or bishop is, that, *besides* having the necessary qualifications (personal, relative, and circumstantial), he was chosen as such by an apostle or an apostolic delegate, like Timothy or Titus. Thus chosen, they were put in that position in the assembly before they exercised their office. This probably was what induced people to imagine the idea of apostolic succession, and to invent it by a fiction, since God provided none. They saw that apostles were necessary to appoint elders or bishops. But scripture gives no warrant for expecting the continuance of divinely-given apostles. Hence they fell upon the theory of succession, yielding to the assumed necessity for a constant appointment of elders. But they have no scripture. The men who are loudest in their cry of order are really therefore convicted of the gravest disorder and presumption.

The fabric of holy orders is built on the sand. They cannot truly defend it by the word of God. In scripture there is no authority for what they are doing, nor anything like it. It is, therefore, however well meant, as mistaken and really rebellious an assumption as appointing magistrates without the seal of the realm.

Such is the fatal net in which most Christian bodies have involved themselves. How much better to do

what scripture warrants, using our gifts in the church of God or without elsewhere going a hair's breadth beyond what it directs or allows us to do?

The Presbyterians, it is true, do not pretend to apostolic succession; they do not claim to have apostles or their delegates; but they fall into at least as great an evil on the other side; for they share between the people and the presbytery that choice and authority which scripture attributes to apostles or their duly commissioned delegates. Will they dare to say, with the New Testament before their eyes, that an ordinary minister was competent to exercise a function which we see there committed only to Paul or Barnabas, to Timothy or Titus?

It is evident that Timothy had a charge over elders or bishops, and that ordinary ministers at Crete could not do what Titus was authorized to do. Presbyterianism and Congregationalism dislocate and deny this beautiful order of scripture, and, by a gross error, let the congregations choose the elders!

But in the word of God there is no such thought as a congregation choosing elders, and then another man or other men appointing them. Such confusion was unknown where God arranged. Would that all were content to bow to revealed facts and truths, and to learn the wisdom of His ways!

Before the apostles closed their career, the declension of the church was palpable, and its ruin irretrievably at hand, if not come. God would not then provide the highest authority to sanction what was slipping more and more from Himself, or to keep up external local order in presence of such growing unfaithfulness overspreading the church as a whole.

In modern times, when Protestant efforts for truth, honest but unintelligent, added to the ecclesiastical chaos, one can understand how wise was the seeming oversight, but really intentional omission, to provide the means of providing elders, any more than apostles, legitimately; as otherwise they must have legitimated the existing confusions of Christendom, which would be as far as possible from the mind of God.

Is it thought that God does not provide amply for the guidance and blessing of His people in the worst of times? There could be no greater mistake. His grace abounds in the richest way, but not so as to annul His moral testimony to His own word against man's corruption and self-will. He gives all that is for His own glory, and our blessing, spite of all the church's sin. For—mark it well—to be a ruler, leader, or chief (*προϊστάμενος* or *ἡγούμενος*) is quite distinct from being an elder. Thus, in Acts xv. 22, 23, Jude, Barsabas, and Silas we see distinguished from the elders, but yet recognised by all as chief (*ἡγουμένους*) men among the brethren; and so it is elsewhere. These two were even said to be prophets (ver. 32).

Undoubtedly the elders ruled, but many servants of Christ ruled who were not elders, and some of them in spheres incomparably larger than that of an elder. Weigh the very passage (Rom. xii.) which has been read, where ruling is maintained without the least reference to elders.

“He that ruleth, [let him do it] with diligence.” Is it argued that an elder may be meant though not named? I answer that no apostle had ever been in Rome up to that time, nor any one delegated to do apostolic work in that great city; consequently there

was no one to appoint elders. Hence the force of the passage. There were gifts of Christ, and among them some necessarily not as yet, if ever, chosen elders; and yet they were rulers. Such a recognition as this has been a comforting word to many a heart, and often a great assurance to servants of Christ in the present perplexity of the church. There are, and will always be, rulers raised up of God, as long as the good of saints calls for them; although the condition of the church is such that they have not and cannot have the official status of elders, because God has not seen fit to perpetuate the needed ordaining authority. I would ask any grave Christian which of the two, in his conscientious judgment, is the best—a real ruler, or a sham elder? This seems exactly the point to which matters come on this head—to be a ruler according to the gift of Christ, or an elder according to a spurious apostolic succession, or the equally unauthorized choice of a congregation, with or without a make-weight ceremony of men who have not the slightest authority from the word of God for it.

But observe another ominous and patent fact. So glaringly is the present state of things in collision with the word of God that there is now sprung up a new kind of official never heard of in apostolic days—the individual called “the minister.” Who ever heard of him in scripture?

There is no such person or office there as that which is commonly known as “*the minister.*” Not to speak of elders, we hear of rulers, preachers, teachers, pastors, ministers in the word, and other ways too, according to what we have been endeavouring to ascertain; and I doubt not that your consciences have gone along

with me, led by the word of God. There were gifts differing, and consequently ministers differing in the same church. There might be many; as in the church at Antioch we heard of Simeon, Manaen, Lucius, Barnabas, and Saul,—various labourers having different gifts, and harmoniously using them. Such is the right principle. It requires no little grace among the companions in labour. This can be dispensed with when a man has the place all to himself; which saves from much difficulty, no doubt, but it sacrifices the will of the Lord. What can be more miserable for those who love His name? Who can deny it? The one-man system is clean contrary to scripture. Is this a light matter? It is to those who deny its Divine and permanent authority. Say not that this is a secondary or unpractical question. A bad conscience can plead this because it fears the truth which condemns the course it chooses to follow. Are you prepared to hold to scripture, or will you yield to unbelief and go on in disobedience, because you have been hitherto unfaithful? Why not look to God for grace to follow as He leads from day to day? Why not begin with humbling yourselves for your blind zeal in so long defending human tradition and fighting against the word of God? Are you indifferent to the fact that you have been systematically slighting what so nearly concerns the Lord's glory? Most of us have known the sorrow; many of us have learnt better through grace. We know what it was to have been merely following the track of our fathers, or at best what we ourselves were attracted to when converted, before making it a distinct question for prayer and the word of God. Certainly it is a great mercy to think of our parents, as well as our

own souls, brought to the Lord ; but the Divine object in all mercies, past and present, is that we may be strengthened to do the will of the Lord now, and henceforth grow in it with increasing fervour and simplicity.

I pray you then, hold fast to the truth of God's word. Search the scriptures, and fear not to obey. The things which puzzle most when not understood illustrate His grace and wisdom when once seen. Thus, when the church was evidently breaking up into parties, and there was to be no longer the one manifested assembly of God on earth, the apostles disappeared. After this the mass fell into ever-swelling corruptions through the admission of Jewish and heathen principles, and sects and parties split off, and at length Popery, etc., and Protestantism with its manifold denominations. In such a state the officials would be only those of a denomination, instead of being bishops set in the flock by the Holy Spirit. The Lord accordingly withdrew the means of imparting a true scriptural charge, when the condition of the church falsified His testimony. So far from finding fault, then, with that which looks anomalous in making it impossible to impart His stamp on that which is spurious, I bless God for the fact that an order which is only human has not the smallest just claim, whatever its pretension, to have God's sanction. From the non-descript minister of a sect, from elders who lack the sole authority which scripture acknowledges, you are driven to reality. It becomes more and more a stand-up fight between infidelity and superstition on one hand, on the other the word of God and the Holy Ghost. Which, then, is your choice ? Infidelity is abandoning scripture as fast as it can ; superstition is

pervverting scripture to maintain the way that it loves ; and both will be found united against the written word. The reality is finding its true place in conflict with them both, not without the joy of the Lord and His known will. May we cleave to God and to the word of His grace ! Manifold difficulties may be experienced ; but He knows how to solve them for us by the Spirit's use of His word.

The subject of ministry is vast and has various points of view, with many details not touched on to-night. I have evaded none ; at the same time to enumerate all at once would be impossible. My desire has been, trusting in the Lord's guidance, to say what I could on it at this time with simplicity and earnestness, with the clearest proof from His word as to His will, on which depends your duty, for they are correlative. May it be yours, then, first to learn what His will is, and then to cleave to it ; and this in a spirit of grace and humility, as becomes such as we are, especially in a day of evil and confusion ! Is it not true, that many of us have found the truth too much for our measure of practical grace ? Have we not been sometimes lifted up, as well as harsh, too ready to find fault with others and to correct mistakes in those who could hardly be expected to receive it, where, therefore, if there had been more grace on our part, we should have allowed many things to pass ? For why force good so as to do evil by an unseemly way ? On every ground, and more urgently, as things are, should we see to it, brethren, that, holding fast the truth uncompromisingly, we may walk in love and lowliness. The Lord make us more simple and devoted to His own name and glory !

THE
TESTIMONY OF THE BIBLE
TO THE
USE AND ABUSE OF WINE,
&c. &c.

WITH A NOTICE OF THE CORRESPONDING TERMS

IN THE
Hebrew and Greek Scriptures,

AND
REMARKS ON THE CHIEF OBJECTIONS OF MODERN TIMES.

BY WILLIAM KELLY.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE BIBLE

TO THE

USE AND ABUSE OF WINE, &c.

THE question of sin, in one shape or another, has, from the first, agitated men's minds. It could not be otherwise. For God erects a tribunal in the conscience of all,—even of the Gentiles who had not His written testimony. (Rom. ii.) Philosophy gave neither solution to the problems of the intellect, nor relief to the anxieties of the heart; for as it could not rise to the Infinite Source of all good, so it did not dare to descend to the depth of the sinner's need. Evading the difficulties as long as was possible, it ended at last with denying all truth as to either. "The world *by wisdom* knew not God;" and where He is unknown, so is sin in its source, its nature and its doom.

On the other hand, the family of faith have ever had a certain knowledge of God, and therefore of themselves. This gradually increased from the word of judgment on the Serpent,

till the Seed came to whom the promise was made. Thus the knowledge, though true and received with a divine conviction, was necessarily partial, as indeed the revelation was, till, in these last days, God spake by His Son, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person. In Him, specially in His death, the real character of everything was made manifest. There the badness of man, set on by Satan's craft, was met and overcome by the goodness of God. The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. There is no veil, as there once was in Judaism. With the cross it could not co-exist, but was rent from top to bottom. And if the holy light of God displays what the sinner is in his wants and wretchedness, it cannot but display the ample provision which God has made in the blood of His own Lamb. Thus is the poor believer taught what sin is by what it has cost the Son of God; and he adores as he sees that where sin has abounded, grace did much more abound.

Hence the distance between the wisest unbeliever and the least instructed believer in their thoughts about sin. To the one, Jesus is nothing; he may admire, and ask what is truth, but, like Pilate, he goes out without waiting for an answer. To the other, Jesus is all, Jesus is truth, and he knows it to his peace and blessing. The former is satisfied with stepping into the troubled waters of Bethesda—with a reformation

of man as he is. The latter sees in sin, not sickness only, but moral death, and therefore can rest in nothing short of the quickening power of the Son of God. He knows that for faith is reserved the resurrection of life, the complement of the spiritual resurrection which is already enjoyed. Alas! he knows too that those who hear not the Saviour's voice have not life, and cannot escape the judgment which shall be executed by and by. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John v. 19, 20.)

Now, the Teetotal system, however modified, will be found to offend against these fundamental truths. Having a low estimate of sin, it presents as low a remedy. Even as to the single evil with which it seeks to deal, it barely skims the surface. It does not, it cannot touch the heart within, and so it wreaks its vengeance upon the liquors without. Pharisaism washed the hands, Teetotalism washes the lips. But the same word of the Lord detects the inadequacy of both. "Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: there is *nothing* from *without* a man that, entering into him, *can* defile him; but the things which come out of him,

those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." (Mark vii. 14-16.) The entire spring of moral action, the heart, is corrupt before God. What man *is*, taints what he *does*. Hence, while the human method is to cut off this and that, the divine is, first of all, to make the tree good. If that be done, good fruit is sure to follow: if not done, the more men work about it they only get more bad fruit.

It is a new life which the sinner requires as the starting point; not a step Godward can be taken previously. But it is precisely this which the Gospel proclaims at once, without money and without price. The gift, the free gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus-Christ our Lord. And God will own no way, no truth, no life, no Saviour but His Son. Therefore, to occupy men with a teetotal pledge, is in fact to divert them at best with a quack medicine, and this, not for the root of the disease, but for a particular symptom—to divert them, I say, from the Gospel, which is as efficacious a cure in the drunkard's case as in all others. For it is the power of God unto every one that believeth.

Since the days of Cain, man has never wanted some new or revived invention wherewith to patch up his outcast condition. If Teetotalism, then, had come forward merely as a medical discovery, or even as a branch of philanthropy,

it might have passed unnoticed save by those whom it concerns. But seeing that, in its grossest form, it taunts the servants of Christ with their vain efforts, and professes to outdo the Gospel; seeing that, in its least offensive shape, it claims Scriptural authority, and aspires to be the pioneer and the handmaid of the Gospel, the subject calls for a passing notice.

The Christian reads the Old Testament. He finds that wine intoxicated Noah and Lot, (Gen. ix. xix,) and that it afterwards afforded occasion for frequent and solemn remonstrance. (Prov. xx. xxiii. Is. v. xxviii., &c.) Again, he finds wine brought as a natural comfort to Abraham and Isaac, (Gen. xiv. xxvii,) and often so treated, literally as well as figuratively. (Deut. xiv. Ps. civ. Prov. ix. xxxi. 6. Cant. *passim*, &c.) He sees in the New Testament neither contradiction nor difficulty. The Lord commenced His miracles by making water into wine, (John ii.) was invidiously compared with His forerunner because He abstained not, (Luke vii,) and made *bread and wine* (*which John the Baptist never used*)* to be the chosen, constant memorial of His dying love till He come again, the symbol also of our communion with each other. Finally, the Holy Ghost more than once dwells on the end of the drunkard, (1 Cor. vi. Gal. v.) corrects the unhallowed licence of the Corinthian

* Will it be said that the use of either is, abstractedly, wrong? Was John the Baptist more pure than his Lord and Saviour? Note well, too, that he abstained from bread as well as from wine. Are we, therefore, to abandon either, or both?

church at the Lord's Supper, (1 Cor. xi.) and warns believers, especially such as were prominent, against excess in daily life. (Eph. v. 1 Tim. iii. Titus ii.) At the same time, He takes pains (1 Tim. v. 23.) to remove the scrupulousness of a devoted young servant of Christ, and enjoins the use of a little wine, rather than water, for his stomach's sake and often infirmities. So graciously does God deign to interest Himself even in the bodily weakness and wants of those who love Him! The conclusion is irresistible. Total abstinence, as a *general* rule, has not, nor ever had, divine sanction. It is a device at issue with the plain facts and doctrine of Scripture; and this as to Christians no less than as to Jews. In the Old Testament *יַיִן* (*yayin*), and in the New Testament *olvos*—that is, the ordinary words for "wine" in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures—are used both in a good and in a bad connection; because the moral evil lay not in the thing itself, nor in its use, but in its abuse. There were different kinds of wine then, (Neh. v. 18,) as there are now. But not a single text intimates a particular sort of *yayin* which could not inebriate. Nay, more: what Scripture does say, disproves the fancy, as the sequel abundantly shows. Thus, Num. vi. 3 plainly marks off *yayin* as *fermented grape-juice*, and that in the vinous as distinguished from the acetous stage; excluding other fermented drinks, vinegar, unfermented grape-liquors, as well as the solid

fruit of the vine. We who adhere to the regular sense of the word are not bound to produce specific proofs; we are entitled to take it in the same sense everywhere, unless positive cause be shown to the contrary. But those who affirm that in certain places the word has a different meaning, are, in each instance, bound to give Scriptural reasons adequate to produce conviction. This they can never do. We deny their affirmation: upon them falls the burden of proof.*

Not to anticipate, however, the Temperance Reformers may be divided in twain. One party consider that alcoholic liquors are essentially poisonous† and therefore evil as a beverage; that in Scripture times there were two distinct genera of wine, &c.,—the one unfermented and a blessing, the other fermented and a curse. But the moderate own that the use of alcohol is not in itself sinful; that inspired men, and even Christ Himself, did not abstain; that the *habitual* use of fermented beverages may be sanctioned by the Bible: still they plead that, though lawful, it is not expedient. It is plain that the latter system destroys the former. Among themselves the difference is keenly felt,

* Hence the fallacy of reasoning upon such words as "Pagan," "Knave," &c., which are *known* to have shifted their meaning. This cannot be *assumed* as to *gayin*. Besides, the alleged parallel does not hold good. When "Pagan" was first used, it *had not* the sense of "idolator;" whereas, when *gayin* is first used in Scripture, it *has* the sense of "fermented grape-liquor." (See Gen. ix. 21; xix. 32-35.)

† Writers on Toxicology include alcohol in the list. But so the ablest consider the chloride of sodium, or common salt. See Taylor on Poisons, pages 2, 3, 291. Is then the use of *salt*, as a condiment of food, evil or immoral?—The same principle applies to *vinegar*.

if we may judge by the unusual acrimony of their recriminations. The partisans of expediency pronounce the doctrine of the ultra-tee-totalers to be "preposterous and pestiferous lucubrations," "mischievous error," and "modern delusion," and hear in return that, in its present shape, their theory is "an absurd and blasphemous abomination, and the sooner it is universally scouted and scorned, *the better*"—"a fraud and a counterfeit of the worst description." Since this is their spirit to each other, he who is forced to condemn them both, can expect little courtesy from either.

Let us, however, examine their arguments; and first, of those who advocate "thorough and consistent Teetotalism."

The words for wine, say they, "must have been, *at first*, necessarily applied and restricted to *fresh unfermented juices*. The primitive process of wine-pressing is well expressed in Gen. xl. 11; and also by Milton," &c. Now, every Scripturian must know that this statement is not only without Bible evidence, but contradicted by it. Noah "drank of the wine and was drunken." This is the *first* recorded application of the word "wine." Is it restricted to fresh unfermented juice? Or does it not necessarily mean the fermented liquor of the grape? This case was *long before* the dream of Pharaoh's butler, even if the process described there had been called *wine-pressing* in the chapter, which

it is not. Nor are the reveries of "Paradise Lost" as to Eve, of weight on such a question.

We are referred to Lev. x., "where *Teetotalism* is proclaimed as the Eternal's selected remedy for intemperance." But, in the first place, the restriction applies simply to *Aaron and his sons*. Secondly, it was in force only *when* they went into the tabernacle. Is this to proclaim Teetotalism? Does it not rather imply the ordinary liberty of the priests to use what on a special occasion was forbidden? Another writer reminds us that under the New Testament all believers are priests. Does he forget that if Aaron's sons are to be spiritually interpreted, so is the type of wine and strong drink? Thus natural joy and excitement seem to be shadowed under these drinks, as the uncovering of the head and rending of the garments were the symbols of natural sorrow. Neither becomes those who enjoy nearness to God. His presence was meant to silence both. Whether, therefore, we look at the type or the antitype, Lev. x. does *not* proclaim Teetotalism.

Next, we are told of "the establishment of the *first* Teetotal Society among the Holy Nazarites." Now, not only is their case a peculiar one like the priests, but there are points essential to the Nazarite which differ alike from the theory and the practice of the Teetotal Society. *His* separation consisted in three grand heads; he was to eat or drink nothing that came from

the vine, to let his hair grow and to come at no dead body. None of these things is put forth as a moral principle more than another. The whole was a carnal ordinance imposed until the time of reformation. To drink wine was defiling to the Nazarite, but it was equally so to cut the hair. Christianity is subject to no part of the ordinance as such, though we may well profit by the truths which it figures. Moreover, when the days of his separation were fulfilled, God ordained that the Nazarite should shave his head and might drink wine. (Num. vi. 13-20.) Does God ordain what is wrong? The Nazarite was then free to drink the very wine which before had been forbidden. Does this permission really square with Teetotalism? Lastly, what has the principle of a separation from *all* vine-produce, in common with the Teetotal pledge? The Nazarite was forbidden the unfermented as well as the fermented, the solid no less than the liquid. Does this accord with the reasoning of "*Tirosh lo yayin*," or of any other accredited work of Teetotalers? If *not one entire verse* of Num. vi. can be honestly interpreted in favour of their society, why cite the Nazarite ritual as their precursor? And how do they seek to escape from the net in which they have entangled their own feet? They are forced to allow that from everything pertaining to the vine the Nazarites equally abstained; but, with self-complacent scepticism, they add, that we, with our better

chemical knowledge, of course do not! Can Christians tamely listen to such contempt of God's Word? The folly, too, of these speeches is only less gross than the sin; for, what had a Nazarite to do with chemistry?

It is enough to remark on the message of the angel of the Lord to the mothers of Samson and of John the Baptist, that theirs was an extraordinary Nazariteship. Again, the Rechabites obeyed in neither building nor sowing, quite as much as in drinking no wine. Their case, if applicable at all, would prove far too much. If it proved that men ought to drink *no wine*, it would prove that they ought to build *no houses*. (Jer. xxxv.) So Daniel and his friends abstained from the king's meat as well as his wine. If they drank water, they eat pulse. It was a question of Jewish cleanness,* not of morality. Accordingly, Dan x. 3 clearly implies that, save in special circumstances, as fasting, the prophet *did* eat flesh and drink wine. The cup offered to the Lord upon the cross, and refused, did not consist of wine merely, and therefore does not bear on the present question. The case of Timothy, as we have seen, proves the reverse of what it is cited to prove.

The reader has before him the Scriptural argument of the extreme party. Let him judge whether the case of the moderate section is not

* Who is it that appeals to the priests or the Nazarites, Samson or Daniel? Is it not the teetotal advocate? And who, then, is chargeable with the fallacy that the record of a Jewish practice establishes its propriety as a Christian principle?

as decided a failure. They appeal to Rom. xiv. 21 and 1 Cor. viii. 13. The question is: does the scope of these texts coincide with that of a Teetotal Society? Is a drunkard the "weak brother" for whose sake the Christian is to forbear using his liberty?*

The simple reading of 1 Cor. viii. shows that nothing is further from the mind of the Spirit. The question here is one "touching things offered unto idols." The Teetotal question has nothing to do with such offerings. That is, the essential features of the Corinthian difficulty do not exist in the case of Temperance. Rom. xiv. (though it mentions wine, which 1 Cor. viii. does not,) is as little to the purpose. At Rome, the dispute grew not out of *Gentile idolatry*, but out of *the religious scruples of the Jewish converts*, who, on certain days, would not partake of meats and drinks. Thus have we seen Daniel abstain from his customary food for three whole weeks, and every Jew similarly testified the affliction of his soul on the Day of Atonement. But it is preposterous to apply such a principle to a Temperance Society. Some Gentiles in these days may refrain from fermented liquors; others may adopt a vegetable diet. Is the Christian to be tossed to and fro at the whim of a world which perverts everything? Is he to refuse anything which God hath created to be received

* See the "Scriptural claims of Teetotalism. By Newman Hall, B.A.," pages 4, 10, 11, 13, 16, 24. (1848.)

with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth? Lastly, the way in which "the weak brother" is treated is as revolting as untrue. 1 Cor. v. proves beyond cavil that a drunkard is a wicked person to be put away from the Church, not a weak brother to be borne with. But Rom. xiv. describes a class as different as possible — not false professors of lax, unholy walk, but real Christians who had feebly realised their deliverance from all questions about things legally clean or unclean. Therefore they retained a conscience in bondage to days, meats and drinks. Where is the analogy between the Roman and the Corinthian cases, and a Teetotal Society? There is none. But if so, it is clear that their argument from Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii. totally perishes.

Let us now glance at the various words in the Bible rendered "wine," "strong drink," &c., and others connected with them. No wise man will deny the possibility or the fact of mistakes in human translations, nor will he say that the least error is of no moment. Yet, the believing soul will rejoice to prove afresh how God has watched over His Word, not indeed to keep the erudite from error, but to feed His babes day by day, even through the least exact translation. A show of learning may puzzle the unlettered Christian who meddles with it, as it will surely

mislead those who trust it rather than the Spirit of God. But the minutest accuracy serves only to confirm the general teaching of Scripture, as might be expected by the heart that knows who and what God is.

§ 1. יַיִן, (*Yayin*,) WINE.

THE ordinary expression for "wine" in the Hebrew Scriptures is יַיִן which occurs an hundred and forty-one times. Like the Greek *οἶνος*, the Latin *vinum*, the Italian and Spanish *vino*, the French *vin*, the German *Wein*, and the corresponding if not cognate term in other languages, it designates the fermented juice of the grape. Gesenius conjectures that it comes from an unused root, conveying the ideas of "boiling," "foaming," &c., which is the parent of the word for "mud," as well as of that for "wine." The allusion seems clear to the frothy, turbid appearance which accompanies the process of fermentation; for, as Pliny, treating of this subject, observes, "*Fervet vinum, cum ex musto in vinum transit.*" The phrase also shows that, in the common parlance of his day, the naturalist drew the same line which moderns do between the fermented and the unfermented juice of the grape.* In Eichhorn's edition of J. Simonis

* It is worthy of note that the passage which Dr. Lees cites from the same author (*N. H.* xiv. c. 9) proves the *reverse* of what it is quoted for, and corroborates what I have stated in the text. "Medium inter dulcia vinumque est quod Graeci *ἀει γλευκός* vocant, hoc est, semper mustum." Clearly, we have *wine* and *sweets* discriminated with care, and not in the least confounded with the intermediate substance, "*always-must.*" Does this show that *vinum* is applied to unfermented things? Does it not prove the contrary?

Lex. Man. Hebraicum, it is derived from the same source, "a fermentatione," while it is added that others seek the sense of softness—"sensum *mollitiei* et *glabritiei* quaerunt, et 12 vertunt proprie *molle*, i.e. *molliter* per fauces descendens, conf. Prov. xxiii. 31 et Cant. vii. 10." Perhaps the author of "Anti-Bacchus" would no longer argue as he did, (page 94,) that the word is derived from 72, (to "press, squeeze,") and therefore simply means an expressed juice.

The usage of the term, as it is more important than the etymology, so is it clear, uniform and decisive. What *we* mean by "wine," unless it be modified by the context which surrounds it, is certainly an intoxicating vinous liquor.*

* In this note are presented the definitions of "wine" given in all the correct dictionaries of the English language to which I have access. The term is explained in its popular sense, as our adversaries demand. That it may, by a natural license of speech, be transferred to the liquor which is going to be fermented, is readily allowed. The mind, anticipating that process, may thus, with a certain logical inexactness, give the name to the juice when it is just pressed from, or even while it is still contained in, the grape. Such is the plain usage of the term in the sentences which Dr. Lees has culled from the writings of Greek and Latin poets, &c., and of certain modern travellers, naturalists, lexicographers, and others. Candid men, who have read passages with their context, must be aware that the meaning grafted on them by the too ardent defenders of Total Abstinence, differs from what was intended by the authors themselves. In the above use of the word, there is moral if not physical accuracy. It is a metaphorical application, which leaves the real import undisturbed. Where this import is departed from, it is incumbent upon any correct writer to supply by the context, plain, indubitable evidence of the sense in which it is employed. So we do nowadays in speaking of "home-made wines." *Save in exceptional cases where the contrary is clearly implied*, the original import, the popular usage and the scientific definition alike agree to include *fermentation* in the idea of *wine*. Thus it is explained: "1. The fermented juice of the grape. 2. Preparations of vegetables by fermentation, called by the general name of *wines*, have quite different qualities from the plant: for no fruit, taken crude, has the intoxicating quality of *wine*." (Johnson's Dictionary, and so Walker.)—"The fermented juice of the grape," &c. "A liquor drawn from vegetable bodies, and fermented: but more especially the fermented juice of the fruit of the vine." (Maunder,—"The fermented juice of the grape; the juice of certain fruits prepared with sugar, spirits, &c., as raspberry-wine, gooseberry-wine," &c. [Of course, this latter clause applies only to modern liquors.] (Craig's Univ. Etym., &c., Dict., vol. ii., page 1075.)

That this is the force of יַיִן will be apparent from the inspection of all the texts wherein it occurs. In Num. vi. 3, "liquor of grapes" is *distinguished* from יַיִן, or "wine," as is plain to the English reader. The "wine" was evidently the fermented liquor: the other phrase denotes any unfermented drink of grape-juice, and, therefore, forbids the thought that it was comprehended under that word. Hence *yayin* was even employed to denote the *effect* of wine. Accordingly, Gesenius gives "*crapula*" as a secondary meaning, and refers to Gen. ix. 24. 1 Sam. i. 14; xxv. 37.

It has been said by Dr. Eadie, in his Biblical Cyclopædia, that it sometimes seems to signify the growing fruit of the vineyard; (Deut. xxviii. 39. Jer. xl. 10-12;) as in Germany, the vine-dresser in spring or summer will say: "The wine" blooms or flourishes well — "the wine" will be good this season. Now, supposing that the expressions were parallel, (for the first text speaks of *drinking* the wine, and surely not the growing fruit,) it is manifest that the phrase is figurative. Nor can a figurative use alter the real force of a word in any language. In fine, יַיִן and *Wein* simply and properly *designate* the fermented liquor made from vine-fruit, and not the fruit itself, nor the bare juice while issuing from the press, though *by a figure* common to ancient and modern tongues, the one or the other may

be so *applied*.* The text already referred to (Num. vi. 3) separates *yayin* from "moist grapes or dried" not less clearly than from any unfermented "liquor of grapes."

In the *Market Drayton Discussion* (page 30) it was alleged, and without contradiction, that in Num. vi. 4 the *wine* and the *vine* tree are synonymous phrases,—that the word *yayin* was employed for the *vine* itself. This is not the fact. The margin gives the original literally, whence the English reader may see that גפן (*gephen*, the regular word for the vine) is found, no less than יין, (*yayin*), which appears here as well as in Judges xiii. 14, not as a synonymous expletive, but for greater accuracy. It is true that *gephen* alone is the general Hebrew term for "vine." Still, *yayin* is clearly added here, as conveying not the same but another idea, to complete and define the sense, because the word in itself was capable of being applied to other plants, as in 2 Kings iv. 39. That is, the allegation is unfounded. Yet, granting it, what does it prove? That there was, or was not, metonymy in such cases? Is it gravely sought to

* See Burne's "Concordance of Scripture and Science," where, speaking of Is. xvi. 10 and Jer. xlviii. 33, the author says (in page 42) that *yayin*, being applied to the juice while issuing from the press, must of necessity have been unfermented; and in page 46, that these same texts seem, upon mature consideration, to refer, in reality, to grapes. That is, we are allowed our choice of meanings, provided we give up the real value of the word! So in page 41, Gen. ix. 21 and xiv. 18 are compared, and the word is confessed to mean intoxicating wine in the former, but in the latter "the probability is great that it was unfermented." In page 45, we are told a different tale: "It is not improbable that the 'bread and yayin' offered to Abram (Gen. xiv. 18) was bread and grapes." The remarks on Eccles. ix. 7 and Cant. ii. 4 need no reply.

make *יוצא*, in its proper sense, interchangeable, not merely with the "liquor of grapes," from which the Spirit of God expressly distinguishes it, nor with the grapes, but even with the vine itself? That it may, by a bold but common form of speech, represent the fruit, is confessed on all hands.

Again, the Teetotal argument founded upon Ps. civ. 13-15 is worthless, because oil and bread, no less than wine, are said to be brought out of the earth. If the context prove "wine" to mean *grapes*, it equally proves "bread" to mean *corn*; and if the latter is unreasonable, (save in a figurative way, as in Is. xxviii. 28,) so is the former.* In truth, to deny figures in Scripture is, so far as man can, to torture and degrade the Word of God. It is ignorance, or worse. And those who boast loudly of their own matter-of-fact exegesis will generally be found to literalize the figurative, to allegorize the historical, and so to stultify the *whole* divine record by forced human accuracy in a *part*, which coheres neither with itself nor with all the rest.

Perhaps it is not amiss to add some few testimonies taken casually as to the nature of wine, which are quite needless to the simple reader of the Bible, but which may possibly be of use where the mind is pre-occupied with the

* In Lam. ii. 12, the swooning children say to their mothers, "Where [is] corn and wine?" (*yayin*.) There is no more reason here to confound wine with grapes than corn with the food which was made of it. In 1 Sam. xxv. 18, 2 Sam. xvi. 1, 1 Chron. xii. 40, Neh. xlii. 15, *yayin* is distinguished from grapes or raisins, which is enough to shew the fallacy of the reasoning.

modern oppositions of science, falsely so called. "Wine, an agreeable spirituous liquor, produced by fermentation from those vegetable substances that contain saccharine matter." (Encycl. Brit. 3d edition, vol. xviii., page 809.)—"The simplest case of fermentation is that of must, or the expressed juice of the grape, which, when exposed, either in close or open vessels, to a temperature of about 70°, soon begins to give forth carbonic acid, and to become turbid and frothy. After a time, a scum collects on the surface and a sediment is deposited: the liquor, which had grown warm, gradually cools and clears, loses its sweet taste, and is converted into *wine*." (Brande's Dictionary of Science.)—"All that which is now called wine in the east," says Mr. Henry Homes, Missionary at Constantinople, "is as truly wine as that which is called wine in France. *Whether boiled or not, whether sweet or sour, all the known wines are intoxicating.** The boiling which the people of certain districts choose to give to their must, for the purpose of securing a wine that will keep better, should not be confounded with the boiling of the same must for the purpose of making sugar and molasses.

* In the face of their own canon that the Bible is not a *modern* book, we are referred by a Teetotal Essayist to Mr. Buckingham's Travels, who informs us that the wines of Lebanon and Helbon are the principal wines of the present day, the former being a *boiled*, and the latter a *rich sweet wine*. "Hence, it is evident (!) that the two wines most esteemed in the Holy Land were boiled wines, were thick and *sweet*, and consequently (!!) were not alcoholic; and these wines were the liquors which the Psalmist says make glad the heart of man," &c.!!! But even if we let pass this last assumption, Mr. Homes proves as a fact, in the face of "Anti-Bacchus," (page 102,) that boiled and sweet wines are intoxicating. Teetotal writers constantly and most confidently state the reverse—that the boiled and the sweet wines of ancient times could not intoxicate.

In the former case, it is boiled perhaps half an hour, and not reduced one-twentieth in bulk; in the latter case, it is reduced more than three-fourths in quantity. And hence an *'inspissated wine'* should never be confounded with *inspissated grape-juice*. The former gives us an intoxicating liquor, and the latter a syrup, or molasses. We might say the same of sweet wines, that although by drying the grapes in the sun, or by boiling the must, the wine is preserved sweeter than it would otherwise be, *such wines are still intoxicating, and some of them extremely so*. In some districts, the people regard *the boiled wines as stronger than the simple fermented ones*.^{*} Those of Mount Lebanon are stronger than the majority of the wines of France." (Bibliotheca Sacra, page 292.)—Mr. Eli Smith, another Missionary in Syria, communicated to the same work the results of his own specific inquiry. "Unintoxicating wines," he says, "I have not been able to hear of. All wines, they say, will intoxicate more or less. So in regard to fermentation, when inquiring if there exists any such thing as unfermented wine, I have uniformly been met with a stare of surprise. The very idea seems to be regarded as an absurdity."

Ch. v.

GENESIS.

9. 21.—He (Noah) drank of the *wine*, and was drunken.
24.—Noah awoke from his *wine*.

^{*} Let those who desire to know how far the statements of "Anti-Bacchus" are trustworthy, compare pages 60, 76, 77-88, where it is constantly reiterated that sweet wines are necessarily weak, and that boiled wines are destitute of strength. It is supposed to be certain. But the supposition is unfounded, as appears from notorious facts stated by a Missionary, who seems to be friendly to Total Abstinence.

Ch. v.

14. 18.—Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and *wine*.
 19. 32.—Come let us make our father drink *wine*.
 33.—And they made their father drink *wine*.
 34.—Let us make him drink *wine*.
 35.—And they made their father drink *wine*.
 27. 25.—And he brought him *wine*.
 49. 11.—He washed his garments in *wine*.
 12.—His eyes [shall be] red with *wine*.

EXODUS.

29. 40.—And the fourth of an hin of *wine* for a drink-offering.

LEVITICUS.

10. 9.—Do not drink *wine* nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee.
 23. 13.—And the drink-offering thereof [shall be] of *wine*.

NUMBERS.

6. 3.—He shall separate [himself] from *wine*, and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of *wine*.
 4.—He shall eat nothing that is made of the *vine* tree (margin, vine of the *wine*.)
 20.—And after that the Nazarite may drink *wine*.
 15. 5.—And the fourth [part] of an hin of *wine* for a drink-offering.
 7.—And for a drink-offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of *wine*.
 10.—And thou shalt bring for a drink-offering half an hin of *wine*.
 28. 14.—And their drink-offering shall be half an hin of *wine*.

DEUTERONOMY.

14. 26.—For oxen or for sheep or for *wine*.
 28. 39.—But shalt neither drink [of] the *wine*, nor gather.*
 29. 6.—Neither have ye drunk *wine*.
 32. 33.—Their *wine* [is] the poison of dragons.
 38.—Which.....drank the *wine* of their drink-offerings.

JOSHUA.

9. 4.—And *wine* bottles, old, and rent.
 13.—And these bottles of *wine*.

JUDGES.

13. 4.—And drink not *wine*.
 7.—And now drink no *wine*.

* The gathering does not refer to the *wine* in this passage, any more than the treading refers to the *vineyards* in Judges ix. 27. In both texts our translators have supplied "the grapes" as needed to complete the sense in English. To a Hebrew it was implied. The version of De Wette adheres rigorously to the original.

Ch. v.

13. 14.—She may not eat of any [thing] that cometh of the *vine* (lit. vine of the *wine*) neither let her drink *wine*.*
19. 19.—And there is bread and *wine* also for me.

1 SAMUEL.

1. 14.—Put away thy *wine* from thee.
15.—I have drunk neither *wine*.
24.—And one ephah of flour, and a bottle of *wine*.
10. 3.—And another carrying a bottle of *wine*.
16. 20.—With bread, and a bottle of *wine*.
25. 18.—Two hundred loaves, and two bottles of *wine*.
37.—And when the *wine* was gone out of Nabal.

2 SAMUEL.

13. 28.—Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with *wine*.
16. 1.—And an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of *wine*.
2.—And the *wine*, that such as be faint.....may drink.

1 CHRONICLES.

9. 29.—And the fine flour, and the *wine*, and the oil.
12. 40.—And bunches of raisins, and *wine* and oil.
27. 27.—Over the increase of the vineyards for the *wine* cellars.

2 CHRONICLES.

2. 10.—And twenty thousand baths of *wine*.
15.—And the barley, the oil, and the *wine*.
11. 11.—And store of victuals, and of oil and *wine*.

NEHEMIAH.

2. 1.—*Wine* [was] before him: and I took up the *wine*.
5. 15.—And had taken of them bread and *wine*.

* Even Dr. Grindrod ("Bacchus," page 237.) cites the mothers of Samson and John the Baptist in order to prove the pernicious influence of alcoholic drinks during gestation. As usual, Mr. Parsons goes still lower in his remarks. "The command given to Samson's mother was not arbitrary, but physiological Alcohol might have made a weakling and a pigmy of Samson, and therefore (!) God enjoined 'total abstinence' both on him and his mother." ("Anti-Bacchus," page 33.) "God works by means: and, in performing a miracle, rarely acts contrary to his own natural laws." (Ibid, page 112.) Passing by the medical view as foreign to our discussion, I am sure that spiritual men will resent these statements, because in truth they deny miracles. For that which is according to natural laws, cannot, for that reason, be a miracle. What are these manifestations of divine power, but effects contrary to the established course of things?—a suspension of, or departure from, known physical laws? To attribute them to such laws is just to explain away all that is really miraculous. Nor can any notion be more opposed by fact. Thus, what was the link between the all-over coming strength, and the uncut locks of Samson? "If I be shaven," said he, "then my strength will go from me." Is this a sequence of which physiology takes cognizance?

Ch. v.

5. 18.—And once in ten days store of all sorts of *wine*.
 13. 15.—As also *wine*, grapes, and figs.

ESTHER.

1. 7.—And royal *wine* in abundance.
 10.—When the heart of the king was merry with *wine*.
 5. 6.—And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of *wine*.
 7. 2.—On the second day at the banquet of *wine*.
 7.—And the king, arising from the banquet of *wine*.
 8.—Into the place of the banquet of *wine*.

JOB.

1. 13.—Eating and drinking *wine* in their eldest brother's house.
 18.—Eating and drinking *wine* in their eldest brother's house.
 32. 19.—Behold, my belly [is] as *wine* [which] hath no vent.

PSALMS.

60. 3.—Thou hast made us to drink the *wine* of astonishment.
 75. 8.—And the *wine* is red.
 78. 65.—A mighty man that shouteth by reason of *wine*.
 104. 15.—And *wine* [that] maketh glad the heart of man.

PROVERBS.

4. 17.—For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the *wine* of violence.
 9. 2.—She hath mingled her *wine*.
 5.—Drink of the *wine* [which] I have mingled.
 20. 1.—*Wine* is a mocker.*
 21. 17.—He that loveth *wine* and oil shall not be rich.
 23. 20.—Be not among *wine*-bibbers.
 30.—They that tarry long at the *wine*.
 31.—Look not thou at the *wine* when it is red.†

* It has been said that *yayin* and *shekar* have a generic sense so as to include unfermented liquors. But our text shows the contrary. In the strong sententious style of the book, a caution is given about wine: not a hint drops about a particular sort. "*Yayin* is a mocker, *shekar* is raging." Most Teetotalers who cite or reason on it, alter the phrase to "*the 'wine' which is 'a mocker.'*" This obviously perverts the meaning. The passage warns against being deceived by *any* wine or strong drink. Vague terms as these are said to be, and, quite unrestricted, seem inconsistent with the hypothesis. On the other hand, the warning agrees well with these two words, if they are the general terms for the fermented liquors of the grape, and of other fruit or grain, known in ancient times. And such is precisely the definition of them given by the most unbiassed and the best judges.

† The reader will scarcely be prepared for the strange version, and the still stranger interpretation of this verse which Mr. Walters ("*Alcoholic Wines*," pages 32, 33.) adopts from the *Truth Seeker*. "Look not then upon the wine, 'when it is turbid, when it giveth its eye in the cup, when it moveth itself upwards,' that is, when it exhibits all the signs o

Ch. v.

31. 4.—Not for kings to drink *wine*.
6.—And *wine* unto those that be of heavy hearts.

ECCLESIASTES.

2. 3.—I sought in mine heart to give myself unto *wine*.
9. 7.—And drink thy *wine* with a merry heart.
10. 19.—And *wine* maketh merry.

SONG OF SOLOMON.

1. 2.—For thy love is better than *wine*.
4.—We will remember thy love more than *wine*.
2. 4.—He brought me to the *banqueting* house. (margin,
house of *wine*.)
4. 10.—How much better is thy love than *wine*.
5. 1.—I have drunk my *wine* with my milk.
7. 9.—Like the best *wine* for my beloved.
8. 2.—I would cause thee to drink of spiced *wine*.

ISAIAH.

5. 11.—That continue until night, [till] *wine* inflame them!
12.—The tabret, and pipe, and *wine*, are in their feasts.
22.—Woe unto [them that are] mighty to drink *wine*.
16. 10.—The treaders shall tread out no *wine* in [their]
presses.
22. 13.—Eating flesh, and drinking *wine*.
24. 9.—They shall not drink *wine* with a song.
11.—A crying for *wine* in the streets.
28. 1.—The fat valleys of them that are overcome with *wine*.
7.—But they also have erred through *wine*.....they are
swallowed up of *wine*.
29. 9.—They are drunken, but not with *wine*.
51. 21.—Afflicted, and drunken, but not with *wine*.
55. 1.—Yea, come, buy *wine* and milk without money.
56. 12.—Come ye, [say they,] I will fetch *wine*.

JEREMIAH.

13. 12.—(*bis*) Every bottle shall be filled with *wine*.
23. 9.—I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom
wine hath overcome.

having become alcoholic; and what is the reason assigned? 'For at last,' the process being finished, and the fruit of the vine being converted into alcohol, 'it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' Now, it is enough to observe here that the words translated "moveth itself upwards" might, as regards the sense, be far better rendered "goeth down sweetly," "smoothly," or "straightly." See Cant. vii. 9. Hence, in the former text, the Vulgate gives "ingreditur blande," &c.; in both texts De Wette has *sanft hinunter gleitet*. The verse portrays the process of intoxication, not of fermenting; the seductiveness clearly belongs to the wine-cup, and not the slightest allusion is made to the signs exhibited by the liquor in the vat. Assuredly it does not become alcoholic after it is poured into the cup, as this extraordinary gloss insinuates.

Ch. v.

25. 15.—Take the *wine* cup of this fury at my hand.
 35. 2.—And give them *wine* to drink.
 5.—And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites, pots full of *wine* and cups, and I said unto them, drink ye *wine*.
 6.—We will drink no *wine* : for Jonadab.....commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no *wine*.....neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed.
 8.—To drink no *wine* all our days.
 14.—He commanded his sons not to drink *wine*.
 40. 10.—But ye, gather ye *wine*, and summer fruits and oil.
 12.—And gathered *wine* and summer fruits very much.
 48. 33.—And I have caused *wine* to fail from the wine-presses.
 51. 7.—The nations have drunken of her *wine*.

LAMENTATIONS.

2. 12.—They say to their mothers, where [is] corn and *wine* ?

EZEKIEL.

27. 18.—In the *wine* of Helbon, and white wool.
 44. 21.—Neither shall any priest drink *wine*, when they enter the inner court.

DANIEL.

1. 5.—Of the king's meat, and of the *wine* which he drank.
 8.—With the portion of the king's meat, nor with the *wine* which he drank.
 16.—And the *wine* that they should drink.
 10. 3.—Neither came flesh nor *wine* in my mouth.

HOSEA.

4. 11.—Whoredom, and *wine*, and new wine take away the heart.
 7. 5.—The princes have made [him] sick with bottles of *wine*.
 9. 4.—They shall not offer *wine* [offerings] to the Lord.
 14. 7.—The scent thereof [shall be] as the *wine* of Lebanon.

JOEL.

1. 5.—And howl, all ye drinkers of *wine*.
 3. 3.—And sold a girl for *wine*, that they might drink.

AMOS.

2. 8.—And they drink *wine* of the condemned in the house.
 12.—But ye gave the Nazarites *wine* to drink.
 5. 11.—But ye shall not drink *wine* of them.
 6. 6.—That drink *wine* in bowls.
 9. 14.—And they shall plant vineyards, and drink the *wine*.

MICAH.

2. 11.—I will prophesy unto thee of *wine* and strong drink.
 6. 15.—And sweet wine, but shalt not drink *wine*.

Ch. v. HABAKKUK.

2. 5.—Because he transgresseth by *wine*.

ZEPHANIAH.

1. 13.—And they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the *wine* thereof.

HAGGAI.

2. 12.—Bread, or pottage, or *wine*, or oil, or any meat.

ZECHARIAH.

9. 15.—And they shall drink [and] make a noise as through *wine*.

10. 7.—And their heart shall rejoice as through *wine*.

§ 2. תִּירוֹשׁ, (*Tirosh*), NEW WINE.

There are eight and thirty occurrences of the word תִּירוֹשׁ in Scripture. From the root יָרַשׁ, which means to *obtain*, and hence to *inherit*, Fürst deduces the meaning *das Gewonnene*, i.e. a *something gained*, an *acquisition*. In this etymology Moses Stuart acquiesces.—“Sic dictum (says Eichhorn’s Simonis) quod se *possessorem hominis faciat*, ejus cerebrum *occupando*, ut ille non amplius sui compos sit.” Parkhurst likewise considered it to mean *new wine*, so called from its strongly *intoxicating quality* in *taking possession* of a man, as in Hos. iv. 11, where the LXX give μέθυσμα and the Vulgate “*ebrietas*.” Substantially alike is the opinion of Gesenius: “*mustum* (ita dictum, quia inebriando cerebrum occupat,” &c.)* He adds, at the close, “*de succo uvæ*

* In the Report of the Market Drayton Discussion, published by Dr. F. R. Lees, that gentleman (p. 29,) “begged to say he entirely concurred with Gesenius as far as his definition went, for he interpreted this same *tirosh* by the Latin *mustum*.” This statement is most astonishing, especially when it is added that, in p. 26, the same speaker had defined *Tirosh* to be “fruit of the vine,” in its *natural or solid state*, comprehending “*wine in the cluster*,” *vinum pendens*, grapes, raisins, &c.; in

Jes. lxxv. 8." So De Wette, *Wie wenn sich Saft in der Traube findet*: elsewhere he translates the word *Most*, save in two places, where he has *Wein*. In the same text, Luther renders it *Most*. The LXX render it $\delta \rho\acute{\omega}\xi \epsilon\nu \tau\hat{\omega} \beta\acute{o}\tau\rho\upsilon\iota$, and similarly the Vulgate, "granum in botro." There does not appear to be any greater difficulty in the phrase of the prophet than in the well known Latin verse, "Vixque merum capiunt grana quod intus habent." In four places the Vulgate has *vindemia*, while the English Bible makes it "new wine" in twelve passages, and once "sweet wine." Dr. S. Lee also and Mr. W. Osborne, Jun., along with Fürst, hold the word to designate "new wine."

A strange hypothesis has been recently advocated by a few, that the word signifies every where the *solid* produce of the vine. But this is amply refuted by Is. lxii. 8, Prov. iii. 10, and Joel ii. 24, which texts clearly indicate its liquid nature.* Not but that תִּירוֹשׁ, like יַיִן, may be used

short, all "vintage fruit." Greek—"Genneema tes ampelou." So elsewhere Dr. L. has said, "That *tirosh* ranked amongst the class of *frutal* produce, however, we have not the slightest doubt." (*Temperance Topic*, page 64, and *passim*.) Now, the definition of Gesenius, right or wrong, is entirely different. He held *tirosh* in itself to mean a liquid, Dr. L. holds it to be a solid. The one defines it as must, the other as grape-fruit. And yet many, never seeing so plain a discrepancy, have swallowed this bold affirmation of entire concurrence with Gesenius' definition! Dr. L. does *not* interpret *tirosh* by *mustum*, unless he alter the recognised meaning of the Latin word to suit his explanation of the Hebrew, which is utterly unwarrantable. Where does *mustum* signify *solid grapes*? It was applied to the grape-juice when expressed and passing through the process of fermentation, which usually lasted for about nine days. When that subsided, the *mustum* became *vinum*. (Dr. Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, page 1045.) It is notorious that the fumes of the liquor, while fermenting, may inebriate.

* Even the author of "Anti-Bacchus" (page 95) and Prof. Stuart have bowed to the force of these Scriptures and rejected this chimera, unless they have changed their mind since. The former, it is true, like

poetically for the vintage fruit, which produced the liquor. Thus Gesenius explained Is. xxiv. 7, "*luget mustum* (i.e. *lugent uvae*,") but this in no wise unsettled the proper meaning of the term. Stress has been laid by the author of *Tirosh lo Yayin* upon Micah vi. 15, as if it established plainly and beyond cavil the above distinction. "Thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and *sweet wine*, but shalt not drink wine." To use the argument stated by Dr. Lees in its most pointed form, "Thou shalt tread *tirosh*, (not drink it,) for the thing trodden out was what usually was drunk. The first was *grapes*, the second *wine*—fresh, unfermented wine." But the Christian turns to the written Word, and finds the specious but shadowy structure dispersed into thin air by the touch of a single verse. The argument from Micah is that, though the יַיִן (*yayin*) was distinctively a liquid, i.e. wine, תִּירוֹשׁ (*tirosh*) being trodden must be a solid, i.e. grapes. Now, "it is written again" in Is. xvi. 10, "the treaders shall tread out no WINE (יַיִן) in their presses." The same Hebrew word expresses the "treading" or "treading out;" and if the one predi-

others of the same school, is rather self-contradictory. Thus, in pp. 94, 95, he says: *Tirosh*, supposed to come from a root meaning "head, chief, or beginning," may refer to the head or berry of the grape, or to the first or chief-juice that begins to flow from the fruit; it is, therefore, (!) promiscuously rendered in the English version by the terms "*wine*," or "*new wine*." In Is. lxxv. 8, it alludes, we are told, to the juice in the ripe fruit before it was expressed; in Ps. iv., it refers to the growth of the unripe grape: so other Scriptures which associate corn and *tirosh*. But in Joel ii. 24, and Prov. iii. 10, it is, according to the same writer, the fresh juice which bursts from the winepress.

cates treading of *tirosh*, the other intimates that it was equally possible in the case of *yayin*. Thus, the proof in Micah vi. for the solidity of *tirosh* turns out to be null. Precisely the same reason appears in Is. xvi. for the solidity of *yayin*, which was nevertheless alleged to be in contrast with *tirosh*, as wine with grapes! Even yet we have not reached the climax of absurdity. For the same controversialist who pleads the treading of *tirosh* as proving it to be grapes, in contradistinction to *yayin*, (or, what he calls "fresh unfermented wine,") had, only in the preceding page, urged the treading of *yayin* as a real, not figurative, thing! In other words, what was *emphatically a solid in page 31* becomes *distinctively a liquid in page 32*. And yet this crude and inconsistent reasoning has imposed with talismanic power upon many. Witness the works of Mr. Mearns, and of Mr. Burne, as well as of the original and more learned authors of the sophism.

Much to the same effect has been built upon the expression "laid by heaps," in 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 6. Advantage is taken of the marginal rendering "dates" instead of "honey," i.e. honey of grapes, dates, &c. It is sought to dispose of the other liquids by making *tirosh* and *yitzhar* mean, not "wine and oil," but *grapes* and *orchard fruit*. Now, waiving other questions, is it not plain that the difficulty of applying "heaps" to wine and oil, is not greater than in

the case of oxen and sheep? Besides, what more natural than that the liquids (supposing them to be such) should be preserved in suitable vessels and thus literally be "laid by heaps?" Details are not given; they might well be deemed unnecessary where the nature of the thing implies the sense. But to alter the force of words, because of these or kindred difficulties which owe their existence to the reader's ignorance, is too serious trifling with the Word of God. Still less to the purpose are such texts as Deut. xi. 14; (comparing 15;) xii. 17; (if you read verse 16;) 2 Kings xviii. 32; Neh. x. 37; xiii. 5; Is. lxxv. 8; Hos. ii. 9, 22; ix. 2; Joel i. 10, 11: they are in no way adverse to the common and correct interpretation. Hagg. i. 11 has been cited as more formidable, the argument being that a drought could only affect growing fruit, and, therefore, that *tirosh* must mean grapes, not wine. But the rest of the verse refutes this slavish literalism. If the drought could affect men, cattle and the labour of the hands, why not *wine* and *oil*?

The last criticism I would notice on this head, is that given in Burne's Concordance, pages 70-73. It originated with Dr. Lees, who has attempted to make the term *shekar* (translated "strong drink") mean, in Deut. xiv. 26, no drink at all, but solid dates, the fruit of the palm. The opinion is founded upon the supposed analogy of expression in the context. Thus,

in verse 22, we have *tirosh* and *yitzhar*, and in verse 26 we have *yayin* and *shekar*. What more evident than their respective correspondence! It matters not that elsewhere the same writers insist most strongly upon their distinction, nay, contrast. *Here* it serves a purpose, that *yayin*, as a specific term, should bear exact correspondence to the generic term *tirosh*, and even that *shekar* should correspond to *yitzhar*! In such reasoning, which is best answered by being simply enunciated, it is hard to say whether positive error or suicidal incongruity is most conspicuous.

CA. v. GENESIS.

27. 28.—And plenty of corn and *wine*.
 37.—And with corn and *wine* have I sustained him.

NUMBERS.

18. 12.—All the best of the *wine*.

DEUTERONOMY.

7. 13.—Thy corn, and thy *wine*, and thy oil.
 11. 14.—That thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy *wine*.
 12. 17.—The tithe of thy corn, or of thy *wine*.
 14. 23.—The tithe of thy corn, of thy *wine*.
 18. 4.—Firstfruit [also] of thy corn, of thy *wine*.
 28. 51.—Not leave thee [either] corn, *wine*, or oil.
 33. 28.—A land of corn and *wine*.

JUDGES.

9. 13.—Should I leave my *wine*.

2 KINGS.

18. 32.—A land of corn and *wine*.

2 CHRONICLES.

31. 5.—The firstfruits of corn, *wine*, and oil.
 32. 28.—The increase of corn, and *wine*, and oil.

NEHEMIAH.

5. 11.—The corn, the *wine*, and the oil.
 10. 37.—Of *wine* and of oil, unto the priests.
 39.—Of the *new wine*, and the oil, unto the chambers.
 13. 5.—The tithes of the corn, the *new wine*, and the oil.
 12.—The tithe of the corn, and the *new wine*, and the oil.

Ch. v. PSALMS.

4. 7.—Their corn and their *wine* increased.

PROVERBS.

3. 10.—And thy presses shall burst out with *new wine*.

ISAIAH.

24. 7.—The *new wine* mourneth, the vine languisheth.
 36. 17.—A land of corn and *wine*.
 62. 8.—The sons of the stranger shall not drink thy *wine*.
 65. 8.—As the *new wine* is found in the cluster.

JEREMIAH.

31. 12.—For wheat, and for *wine*, and for oil.

HOSEA.

2. 8.—And *wine*, (margin, *new wine*,) and oil.
 9.—And my *wine* in the season thereof.
 22.—The earth shall bear the corn, and the *wine*, and the oil.
 4. 11.—Whoredom and *wine* and *new wine* take away the heart.*
 7. 14.—Assemble themselves for corn and for *wine*.
 9. 2.—And the *new wine* shall fail in her.

JOEL.

1. 10.—The *new wine* is dried up.
 2. 19.—I will send you corn, and *wine*, and oil.
 24.—The fats shall overflow with *wine* and oil.

MICAH.

6. 15.—And *sweet wine*, but shalt not drink *wine*.

HAGGAI.

1. 11.—Upon the *new wine*, and upon the oil.

ZECHARIAH.

9. 17.—And *new wine* the maids.

* In the body of "Anti-Bacchus," Mr. Parsons observes, (page 95,) that "it is classed with *wine*, and certainly (!) may mean *clusters of grapes eaten with the wine* which the sensualists there mentioned were drinking at their luxurious feasts;" and in a note he adds, that "to say '*wine and wine take away the heart*' would be tautology." But this is *not* what Scripture says, and it is hard to see the impropriety of classing *wine* and *must* together as instruments in the seduction of the heart from God. The text shows, first, that *yayin* no more includes *tirosh* than *tirosh* includes *yayin*; and, secondly, that the effort to distinguish them as "*Tirosh lo yayin*" attempts to do, is fallacious. They are distinct but not to be set the one against the other, as if the former were good and the latter evil; for as many texts elsewhere show that either may occur in a connexion of blessing, so this Scripture proves that both may be the occasion of sin. It is singular that "Anti-Bacchus" has the same text cited thus in page 13: "'Wine and strong wine,' says Hosea, '*take away the heart*.'" That is, what was "*strong wine*" at the beginning of the essay may mean *clusters of grapes* at the end. In truth, the term means neither the one nor the other. The authorised version is right, and these proposed but conflicting renderings are both of them baseless and untrue.

§ 3. חָמֶר, (*Chamar*), RED WINE.

The Chaldee חָמֶר and the Hebrew חָמֶר appear, in slightly varied forms, in the appended texts. According to Prof. Stuart, the word comes from a root which means to *ferment*. So Gesenius, "a fermentando dictum." In Ps. lxxv. 8, the root is found, which Stuart and De Wette view in the sense of "ferments;" our translators preferred "is red;" and Gesenius, "*aestuavit, ferbuit*," though he also gives "*rubuit*" as a secondary sense. In Deut. xxxii. 14, Stuart understands it to mean "*fermentable liquor*," the LXX *olov*, the Vulgate *merum*, and De Wette *Wein*. *Khamr* is the name in Arabic for ordinary wine, as distinguished from *Nebidh*, a home-made fermented raisin-liquor, but so mild that its alcoholic quality is often undetected.

CH. v. EZRA.

6. 9.—Wheat, salt, *wine*, according to the appointment of the priests.
7. 22.—And to an hundred baths of *wine*, and to an hundred baths of oil.

DANIEL.

5. 1.—Belshazzar the king drank *wine* before the thousand.
- 2.—Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the *wine*, commanded.
- 4.—They drank *wine*, and praised the gods of gold.
- 23.—Thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk *wine* in them.

DEUTERONOMY.

32. 14.—And thou didst drink the *pure* blood of the grape.

ISAIAH.

27. 2.—A vineyard of *red wine*. [Some copies read ך for ך, which, if right, would alter the meaning to "*pleasant* vineyard," but most read as given in the text.]

§ 4. סֶבֶח, (*Soveh*), WINE DRINK.

The word סֶבֶח is found thrice, and evidently means an intoxicating liquor. It seems analogous, in many respects, to μέθυ, (Lat. *temetum*), which competent scholars say was perhaps at first any strong drink. Gesenius explains it "1) *vinum* Jes. i. 22; Nah. i. 10. 2) *compotatio* Hos. iv. 18." It is formed from a verb meaning to *swill*, ("potavit, idque intemperantius, *ingurgitavit*." Gesenius) and is a different thing from the שֶׁבֶר or *mel uvarum*, i.e. must boiled down to one half (*defrutum*) or one third. (*sapa*.) Pliny and Columella treat these preparations not as wine, but as allied to it. They were syrups used as medicaments for their wines, and, naturally enough, are described in the treatises which discuss the nature and kinds of ancient wine. We have already seen that, even if the word meant a boiled wine, such a liquor inebriates.

The author of "Anti-Bacchus," (p. 97,) in the face of the Bible, maintains, from what he calls science, that the alcoholic wines of Palestine, if they did exist at all, were too weak to make persons reel, and therefore that, in such a case, they must have been drugged. Nevertheless, he regards *soveh* with suspicion. It is never, says he, "recommended in Scripture." Not so the "Concordance of Scripture and Science," though the author confesses "it is somewhat remarkable that such an innocent preparation (!) should

bear a name derived from a verb signifying to 'guzzle.' In *Tirosh lo Yayin*, it is treated as the "most superior wine." But *sapa* and *de-frutum*, with which various Teetotal writers would identify the Hebrew term, refer to grape jellies. "They were nothing else," says Prof. Ramsay, whom they are bold enough to cite, as if he agreed with their view; whereas, in fact, he destroys it.

CA. v.

ISAIAH.

1. 22.—Thy silver is become dross; thy wine mixed * with water.

* The word above rendered "mixed," means "circumcised," "cut:" a mode of expression common to the East and West, even to the present day. Prof. Stuart admits that the liquor in question was, in its original state, *lively* and *sparkling*, and perhaps *alcoholic*; but if so, a chemist would say there was no doubt of the latter.—Let me take the opportunity of saying that, in the Teetotal publications I have seen, the references to the profane writers of antiquity are not a whit more accurate than their use of Scripture. A partial view of the author cited is a flaw of frequent occurrence, and not the gravest fault. Thus, in "Anti-Bacchus," much emphasis is laid upon the wine described by Homer. It was *μελιχρὸς*, and therefore! free from alcohol. But, how comes it that the reader is never told of the praise lavished on the wine of these times, because it was *αἰθρὺς*, i.e. fiery or sparkling? Does the latter epithet prove that the wine was not fermented? or that it owed *this* characteristic to drugs?—Again, it is said, all writers seem to agree that the Greek wines were lusciously sweet. Now, without multiplying proofs to the contrary, we are assured by Prof. Ramsay that "there is no foundation whatever for the remark that the finest Greek wines, especially the products of the islands in the Aegean and Ionian seas, belonged, for the most part, to the luscious sweet class. The very reverse is proved by the epithets *αἰσθηρός*, *σκληρός*, *λεπτός*, and the like, applied to a great number, while *γλυκὺς* and *γλυκάριον* are designations comparatively rare, except in the vague language of poetry. 'Vinum omne dulce minus odoratum,' says Pliny. (*H. N.* xiv. 11), and the ancients appear to have been fully sensible that sweet wines could not be swallowed either with pleasure or safety, except in small quantities. The mistake had arisen from not perceiving that the expressions *οἶνος γλυκὺς* and *οἶνος ἡδύς* are by no means necessarily synonymous. The former signifies wine *positively sweet*; the latter, wine agreeable to the taste, from the *absence of acidity*, in most cases indicating nothing more than *sour wine*." (Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, page 1050.) Further, what unbiassed person could argue from the expressions of a Roman poet that Lesbian was absolutely without alcohol? That it was among the weakest wines, and therefore termed comparatively "innocent," all admit, but that it was an unfermented liquor is mere assumption. Those who assert it are bound to adduce something like evidence.

Ch. v.

HOSEA.

4. 18.—Their *drink* is sour. (margin, *gone*.)

NAHUM.

1. 10.—And *while they are drunken* [as] drunkards.

§ 5. דִּבְרֵי, (*Asis*,) SWEET WINE.

Besides occurring once as spiced wine of the *juice* of pomegranate, it is found in four places and translated *sweet*, or *new wine*. It is unquestionably derived from a root which means to tread: "*succus, calcando expressus, spec. succus uvarum, mustum.*" (Eichhorn's *Simonis*.) In its origin, then, the word may have denoted no more than "trodden juice." Its usage is a different question. Thus, it was employed to express the juice of fruit irrespective of treading; and the context of Is. xlix. 26, and Joel i. 5, is decisive as to its intoxicating quality where it denotes wine: Prof. Stuart himself admits this, as regards the former passage. Lowth, in his *Notes on Isaiah*, gives it as his opinion that even Cant. viii. 2 means wine, made inebriating by the mixture of more powerful ingredients.

Ch. v.

CANTICLES.

8. 2.—To drink of spiced wine of the *juice* of my pomegranate.

ISAIAH.

49. 26.—Drunken with their own blood, as with *sweet* (margin, *new*) wine.

* There seems to be strong reason to prefer, with the margin, the natural sense of *soor*, as "departed," "past." ("*recessit*, i.e. *transiit*," Gesenius.) Compare Amos vi. 7. So the Vulgate, "*Separatum est convivium eorum*," and De Wette, *Ist ihr Zechgelag vorüber*.

Ch. v. JOEL.

1. 5.—Howl, all ye drinkers of wine because of the *new wine*.
3. 18.—The mountains shall drop down *new wine*.

AMOS.

9. 13.—And the mountains shall drop *sweet* (margin, or *new*) *wine*.

§ 6. מִמְסַק, (*Mimsak*,) MIXED WINE.

The word occurs twice. It is explained by Gesenius as "*vinum aromatibus mixtum*. i. q. מִמְסַק, מִמְסַק." The mingling here was not, as in some cases, to dilute the liquor, but rather to increase its strength, like Pliny's "*vinum aromatites*,"* and the *τρίμμα* of Athenæus. Accordingly, in the the LXX we have *κέρασμα* in Is. lxxv. 8. The Vulgate is more like the authorized version, "*libatis*." The meaning seems to be "preparing the *mixed wine* for Meni," i. e. Fate. De Wette adopts Mills' view of the word here, as "the goblet" in which the *mingling* took place; in Prov. xxiii. he renders it "the mixed wine." The word מִמְסַק occurs in Cant. vii. 2, where it is vaguely rendered "liquor," but better represented in the margin as "*mixture*." "*Vinum mixtum*, i. e. *aromatibus conditum*," is the expla-

* When the same writer says that "the most wholesome wine is that which has nothing added to the must," he does *not* mean that the liquor, in its unfermented state, was wine, properly so called; but that the mixture of drugs (which, according to the Roman custom, was previous to or during fermentation, and not, as with the Greeks, afterwards) is injurious. Neither does he intimate that this most wholesome wine would not inebriate. Again, the filtering which he describes was meant, not to make the wine more moral, if we may use the absurd term of Theophrastus, but more useful to debauchees who wisbed to drink an immense quantity with the least possible danger of intoxication.

nation of Gesenius. So also the kindred מִסָּךְ “*mixture*,” in Ps. lxxv. 8. The verb-form occurs in the sense of mingling spice with wine in Prov. ix. 25 and Is. v. 22, which Gesenius classes together. One is a good, the other is an evil connection. Nor is the word *mesek*, but *mimsak*, in Prov. xxiii. 30, contrary to the statement in the “Concordance of Scripture and Science,” pages 62, 63. It is also the strange assertion of another writer (*Temperance Topic*, page 129) that the Greek *ἄκρατος* answers to the Hebrew מִסָּךְ: in reality, the latter means “mingled;” the former, “unmingled.” The same writer gives *merum* to another Hebrew word, whereas it is the Latin term for *ἄκρατος*.

Ch. v. PROVERBS.

23. 30.—They that go to seek *mixed wine*.

ISAIAH.

65. 11.—And that furnish the *drink-offering* unto that number.

§ 7. שֵׁכָר, (*Shekar*), STRONG DRINK.

שֵׁכָר, to which the Greek *σικερα* evidently corresponds, is connected by Fürst with *ker*, a Sanscrit root, signifying *to burn*; by others, with an Arabian word, (whence our *sugar*), which denoted a saccharine substance, whether in a liquid or in a concrete state. The verb-form *

* It is thus explained by Gesenius, “1) *bibit ad satietatem* (l. q. *ravah*) Hagg. i. 6, *ad hilaritatem usque* Cant. v. 1; Gen. xliii. 34. *Saeplus est 2) inebriavit se,*” &c.

is frequently used in Scripture (as in Gen. ix. 21; 1 Sam. i. 14; 2 Sam. xi. 13; Is. xxix. 9, &c.) to denote intoxication. Accordingly, Gesenius explains the term, "*temetum, potus inebrians, sive vinum Num. xxviii. 7, sive potus vini instar inebrians,*" &c. The ancient versions, the Greek and Latin fathers, and the lexicographers of early and recent times coincide in representing it as a liquor possessed of inebriating properties. See especially Prov. xx. 1, and Is. xxviii. 7. In one passage only it is clear, if we compare Num. xxviii. 7, with Ex. xxix. 40, that wine is meant. Elsewhere, it was an artificial wine made of barley, wheat, honey, or any fruits, excepting grapes. So Jerome says: "*Sicera* Hebraeo sermone omnis potio, quae inebriare potest, sive illa," &c. In Eichhorn's *Simonis* it is explained as *an intoxicating drink*, 1) *a sort of ale*. 2) *palm-wine*. Bishop Lowth prefers the rendering "sweet drink," yet considers that its name is "from its remarkable inebriating qualities." De Wette agrees with the English translators, in rendering it "strong drink," which is obviously better than "sweet drink;" because the latter does not, and the former does, convey the idea of the intoxicating power which the very best authorities connect with *shekar*. It occurs in Scripture twenty-three times, where its force is evident. That it refers to sweet fruit in Deut. xiv. is, as we have seen in § 2, a mere and groundless fancy. The word "eat" (אכל) is no

valid objection to the liquid interpretation, as the reader may gather from Is. lv. 1. See also Eichhorn's *Simonis* and *Gesenius* on Is. vii. 15, 22.

CA. v. LEVITICUS.

10. 9.—Do not drink wine nor *strong drink*.

NUMBERS.

6. 3.—He shall separate [himself] from wine, and *strong drink*, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of *strong drink*.
28. 7.—In the holy [place] shalt thou cause the *strong wine* to be poured unto the LORD for a drink-offering.

DEUTERONOMY,

14. 26.—For wine, or for *strong drink*, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth.
29. 6.—Neither have ye drunk wine or *strong drink*.

JUDGES.

13. 4.—And drink not wine nor *strong drink*.
7.—And now drink no wine nor *strong drink*.
14.—Neither let her drink wine or *strong drink*.

1 SAMUEL.

1. 15.—I have drunk neither wine nor *strong drink*.

PSALMS.

69. 12.—The song of the drunkards. (margin, drinkers of *strong drink*.)

PROVERBS.

20. 1.—*Strong drink* [is] raging.
31. 4.—Nor for princes *strong drink*.
6.—Give *strong drink* unto him that is ready to perish.

ISAIAH.

5. 11.—Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow *strong drink*.
22.—Men of strength to mingle *strong drink*.
24. 9.—*Strong drink* shall be bitter to them that drink it.
28. 7.—Through *strong drink* are out of the way: the priest and the prophet have erred through *strong drink* they are out of the way through *strong drink*.
29. 9.—They stagger, but not with *strong drink*.
56. 12.—And we will fill ourselves with *strong drink*.

MICAH.

2. 11.—I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of *strong drink*.

§ 8. שְׁמָרִים, (*Shemarim*), LEES.

The term is twice (Is. xxv. 6) translated "*wines on the lees*," twice "*lees*," (Jer. xlviii. 11. Zeph. i. 12,) and once "*dregs*." (Ps. lxxv. 8.) It is said that a kindred word is found in the Coptic, where it means "fermentation." In the first of these texts De Wette gives *Hefen-weinen*, and in the others *Hefen*, which means lees, as well as yeast. Most lexicographers derive the Hebrew word from a root meaning to *preserve*, but their explanations are various. That rich old wine is figuratively referred to in Is. xxv. 6, they admit, as many accurate versions have done. The link is easy between *lees* and *wine*, not so with "*sweet-meats*," whereby some would render the word.

§ 9. יֶקֶב, (*Yekev*), WINEFAT.

It may be well to notice that יֶקֶב, rendered "wine" in Deut. xvi. 13, means "wine-press," or specifically, "winefat." (*ὑπολήνιον*, *lacus torcularis*.) See Num. xviii. 27, 30; Deut. xv. 14; Judges vii. 25; 2 Kings vi. 27; Job xxiv. 11; Prov. iii. 10; Is. v. 2; xvi. 10; Jer. xlviii. 33; Hos. ix. 2; Joel ii. 24; iii. 13; Hagg. ii. 16; Zech. xiv. 10, which are all the other passages of the Old Testament where the word occurs. The *vat* is used figuratively for the wine it produced, as the *floor* is for the corn. De Wette preserves the figure thus: *Wenn du einsammelst von deiner Tenne und von deiner Kelter*, as the

LXX and the Vulgate had done before him. The margin of the English Bible gives the literal force in the only instance where the text departs from it.

§ 10. אֲשִׁישׁ עֲנָבִים, (*Ashishah Anavim*),

GRAPE CAKES.

In Hos. iii. 1, we find the expression אֲשִׁישׁ עֲנָבִים, which is rendered in our version "flagons of wine." (Margin, grapes.) Gen. xl. 10, 11; xlix. 11; Jer. xxv. 5; Num. vi. 3; xiii. 20, 23; Deut. xxiii. 24; xxxii. 14, 23; Neh. xiii. 15; Is. v. 2, 4; Jer. viii. 13; Hos. ix. 10; Amos ix. 13, are all the passages where the former term occurs, and thereby the marginal translation is justified. This is confirmed by the connected word which means, says Gesenius, "*liba*, spec. qualia ex uvis passis in certam quandam formam constipatis parare solebant." "Cakes of grapes," or "raisins," would appear to be the right rendering. So De Wette gives *Rosinenkuchen*, not only here, but in 2 Sam. vi. 19; 1 Chron. xvi. 3; Cant. ii. 5.

§ 11. דֶּבֶשׁ, (*Devash*), GRAPE HONEY.

Besides this confection of dried grapes, a kind of grape-jelly, or jam, is mentioned in Scripture. (See § 4.) For this the Hebrews employed the term דֶּבֶשׁ, which was used to denote not only common

and wild honey, but also an artificial syrup made of grapes, dates, &c., as probably is meant in Gen. xliii. 11, 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, and Ezek. xxvii. 17. Gesenius adds, that it was must boiled down to one-third or one-half—Gr. *ζψημα*; lat. *sapa*, *defrutum*, &c. “The finest grapes” (says a modern traveller in Palestine, Dr. Robinson,) “are dried as raisins; and the rest being trodden and pressed, the juice is boiled down to a syrup, which, under the name of *dibs*, (debesh in Hebrew, signifying honey and syrup of grapes,) is much used by all classes, wherever vineyards are found, as a condiment with their food.” There is no reason whatever to confound, either with this syrup or with the grape-cakes of Hosea iii. 1, any one of the terms for wine which have been already explained. These preparations of the grape, whether solid or liquid, were probably unintoxicating.* Not so the סבא, the עֲסִיס, and the שְׁמֵרִים, with which some modern writers have sought to identify them. (See §§ 4, 5, and 8.)

While upon this we may refer to מִמְתַּקִּים, (*Mamtakkim*), the plural of a word which means “sweetness.” Besides in Cant. v. 16, which is not to our purpose, it occurs in Neh. viii. 10, where our Bible gives “the sweet.” It is used to express sweet drink, without defining any particular kind; and so may have included *yayin* and *shekar*. Some may be inclined to view it as

* Nevertheless, Mr. W. E. Lane, author of “The Modern Egyptians,” speaks of *zedeed* as a name given to an intoxicating conserve, as well as to raisin-liquor.

οινόμελι of the Greek, or *mulsum* of the Roman. This was of two kinds; in the one honey was mixed with wine, in the other with must. The latter, therefore, says Prof. Ramsay, was merely a very rich fruit syrup in no way allied to wine. The context, however, seems to favour the less determinate sense.

§ 12. יַדְמָה, (*Dema*,) LIQUORS.

Moreover, in Exodus xxii. 29, we have another word which is as yet unnoticed, יַדְמָה. In the text, it is rendered "liquor," and in the margin "tear," which is its literal force, though, being here used metaphorically of must and oil *dropping* from the press, our version gives the sense. De Wette has *Mit der Fülle [deiner Tenne] und dem Ausflusse [deiner Kelter]* as the LXX, with equal indefiniteness, ἀπαρχὰς ἄλωνος καὶ ληνοῦ. A similar application of "tears" occurs among the Arabs, as well as in Latin and Greek authors. Thus Theophrastus has τῶν δένδρων τὰ δάκρυα, and Pliny, *arborum lacrimas*. (*N. H.* lib. xi. c. 6.)

§ 13. יַחְמֵץ, (*Chometz*,) VINEGAR.

Prof. Stuart has attempted, but in vain, to disturb the common rendering of יַחְמֵץ in Num. vi., where the Nazarite, it is said, "shall drink no *vinegar* of wine, or *vinegar* of strong drink." So the LXX ὄξος ἐξ οἴνου καὶ ὄξος ἐκ σίκερα οὐ πίνεται, and

the Vulgate, "acetum ex vino, et ex qualibet alia potione." It occurs also in Ruth ii. 14, Ps. lxix. 21, Prov. x. 26, xxv. 20, and in all is translated "vinegar." But in the Nazarite's case, the American Professor would have it to mean *fermented wine*, or fermented *shekar*, because of its derivation. Now, it is clear that, if this notion had been well founded, it would destroy his own main position, that *yayin* and *shekar* are *generic* terms, including fermented as well as unfermented liquors. Again, it is certain, first, that fermentation is *equally* predicable of acetous as of vinous liquors; and, secondly, that if, strictly speaking, חֲמֶץ means *acidification*, then *acidulated* wine or strong drink, is a phrase *more* applicable to the acetous than to the vinous fermentation. Thus, then, the true restriction laid down in the chapter respects: 1, the fermented liquor of grapes, (יַיִן) and of other fruits or of grain, &c. (שֵׁכָר); 2, the vinegar of these liquors; 3, any liquor of grapes.* (מִשְׁרֵת-עֲנָבִים) "*potus ex uris solutis s. maceratis*," Gesenius.) This might include such a liquor as is described in the dream of Pharaoh's butler, which certainly was not wine† or vinegar, and was called neither the one nor the other in Gen. xlii.; 4, moist grapes or

* Green grapes are, to this day, used in various ways in making a sour-sweet drink, as we are informed by the Missionary Homes.—In Eichhorn's *Simonis*, we are told that F. M. Luft understood it to be the sherbet of the Arabs.

† "Ægyptii enim (says Rosenmüller) ante Psammetichi regis ætatem neque ipsi biberunt vinum, neque Diis libarunt, docti a sacerdotibus vino inesse pestiferum aliquid."

dried; and 5, any thing made of the vine, from the kernels even to the husk.

It remains to notice the corresponding words in the New Testament.

§ 1. ΟΙΝΟΣ, WINE.

οἶνος, (*vinum*), is unquestionably "the general term for the fermented juice of the grape." (Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, page 1044.) When accompanied by qualifying terms, it was, like our own "wine," capable of being applied to wines made of palm-juice, lotus-juice, &c. Similarly modified, it was even used of the fermented juice of apples, pears, &c., and of barley, wheat, &c. There was, besides, a large class termed *οἶνοι ἑργηνοί*, into which drugs were introduced for medicinal purposes. Not only, says Prof. Ramsay, were spices, &c., steeped in wine or incorporated during fermentation, but even the precious perfumed essential oils (*unguenta*) were mixed with it before it was drunk. In Rev. vi. 6, *οἶνος* is used, by *metonymy*, for the vine-fruit.* But such a case

* Just so, we speak of "a wine-grower," instead of employing the more literally correct phrase, "a grower of vines." But no sensible person would say, on this account, that "wine" means "vine fruit." The same principle applies to the figurative usage of *vinum* (for grapes) in Plautus, or Varro, and to *vinum pendens* in Cato; it explains the remark of Gesner, that *vinum, vitis, uva*, and *vinca*, as kindred terms, are sometimes used synonymously. If unlimited, there is no sense in it, but this the learned critic never meant.—While upon the point, it may be observed that Livy does *not* speak of any invaders being "captivated by the lusciousness of the fruits, especially of the grape." His real words are: "Eam gentem, traditur fama, dulcedine frugum, maximeque vini nova tum voluptate captam, Alpes transisse, agrosque ab Etruscis ante cultos possedissee: et invexisse in Galliam vinum illiciendae gentis

affords not the slightest ground for the notion that it ever does or can denote, *properly*, any thing else than *wine*, i.e. fermented grape-liquor. Such reasoning would unsettle the basis of all language. And yet this is the ground on which some* have ventured to assail the ordinary meaning which has been hitherto attached to תִּירָשׁ and יַיִן—to the former in every passage, and to the latter in certain texts of the Old Testament! Here, as there, we have the corn (distinguished, it is true, in a remarkable way,) and the oil. And it is the association of the corn and the oil with the wine, which, among other considerations, has led to the fancy that their Hebrew equivalents, so often joined together, mean really, and not metonymically only, the solid produce or ingathering of the field, the orchard and the vineyard. Nobody denies that we may so understand the words by the familiar figure which takes the wine and oil as the chief representatives of all the other products. From this *figurative application* to argue that ελαιον and ολβος *really mean* olives and grapes respectively—from a similar premiss to draw the same deduction

caussa," &c. No scholar can have the least hesitation as to the meaning of the historian. By *vini* and *vinum*, he means "wine," and nothing else. Dr. Lees has no warrant for asserting that "*the grape*" is meant in Livy v. 53. Compare ix. 30; x. 23; xxv. 23; xxvi. 14; xxix. 8; xxxvi. 11, 14; xl. 19; xli. 4; xliv. 30, where, as in the passage so needlessly questioned, the word has its ordinary sense.

* See, for example, Dr. Kitto's "Physical History of Palestine," page cccxxiv., and the articles by another, on Drink, Fruit, and Wine, in his "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature." It is only fair to add, that in his "Pictorial Bible" (Standard Edition, 1848) the author is understood to have returned to the older and sounder view, if we are to judge by the note on Micah vi. 15.

as to יִצְחָר and *תִּירוֹשׁ — is a sample of the critical ingenuity of our day, which makes up in temerity what it lacks in truth and even the appearance of reason.

Ch. v.

MATTHEW.

9. 17.—Neither do men put new *wine* into old bottles :
else the bottles break, and the *wine* runneth out,
and the bottles perish ; but they put new *wine*
into new bottles.

MARK.

2. 22.—And no man putteth new *wine* into old bottles :
else the new *wine* doth burst the bottles, and the
wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred :
but new *wine* must be put into new bottles.
15. 23.—They gave him to drink *wine* mingled with myrrh.†

LUKE.

1. 15.—And shall drink neither *wine*.
5. 37.—And no man putteth new *wine* into old bottles ;
else the new *wine* will burst the bottles.
- 38.—But new *wine* must be put into new bottles.‡

* For a specimen of the inconsistency which goes hand in hand with error, compare, as to *yitzhar* and *shemen*, Burne's Concordance, pages 44, 45, and 56. The real difference between the two words is, that the latter means oil in general, the former means new fresh oil—"oleum," says Gesenius, "maxime recens et hornum." The relation is similar to that between *lirosk* and *yayin*. Pliny's phrase—*mustum olei*—may illustrate this.

† The corresponding text in Matthew (xxvii. 34) seems to show that the *wine* in this case was a sour small liquor, *ōsos*, translated vinegar, and occurring in verse 38 of the same chapter, Mark xv. 36, Luke xxiii. 36, John xix. 29 (bis), 30. The mingling with myrrh was to produce stupefaction, and the Lord refused that cup.

‡ In commenting on verse 39, the author of "Anti-Bacchus," (pages 107, 108,) first urges that it may simply allude to taste, some preferring old *wine*, and others new. This notion at least derives no countenance from the text, which seems to insinuate the reverse. But another explanation follows,—"Old wines, among the Romans, signified weak wines, very thick wines, wines that had not fermented and would not ferment. Pliny says, &c. . . . A sweet weak wine was therefore (!) the old wine most sought after," &c. Now, without pausing more than to state that the opening and closing remarks of the same paragraph are at open war, a citation from Prof. Ramsay's art. VINUM, is sufficient to show how far the second explanation is more successful than the first. "The ancients considered old wine, not only more grateful to the palate, but also more wholesome and invigorating, (Athen. i. p. 26. a. ii. p. 36. e.) and, curiously enough, Pliny seems to suppose that it grew more strong and fiery by age, in consequence of the dissipation of the watery particles." (H. N. vii. 3.) From the preceding page of Dr. Smith's Dictionary, it will be seen that the great majority of inferior wines were thin, watery and

- Ch. v.
 7. 33.—Neither eating bread, nor drinking *wine*.
 10. 34.—Pouring in oil and *wine*.

JOHN.

2. 3.—And when they wanted *wine*, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no *wine*.
 9.—The water that was made *wine*.*
 10.—At the beginning doth set forth good *wine* thou hast kept the good *wine* until now.
 4. 46.—Where he made the water *wine*.

ROMANS.

14. 21.—Neither to eat flesh, nor to drink *wine*.

EPHESIANS.

5. 18.—And be not drunk with *wine*, wherein is excess.†

contained little alcohol. See pages 1047-1049. After this it is needless to expose the many wild statements of Archdeacon Jeffreys in his sermon on the wine made and used by our Lord. Of these, two may be cited as samples: "the unfermented wines of the ancients were the *only* wines that would keep." "The *most esteemed and highly valued* wines of the ancients, were *totally different* from what we now call wines . . . were unfermented and unintoxicating." Even Dr. Lees, extreme a partisan as he is, admits that the unfermented liquor was best when new, while of fermented wine we say, "the *old* is better." (*Temperance Topic*, page 130.) This frank avowal will also dispose of Prof. Moses Stuart's argument in page 53 of the same publication.

* Is it right to quote Augustine (in Joann. tract 8) as a Teetotal witness in any way or degree? In truth, he argues *against* the Manicheans, and taxes them with perverseness in attributing wine to the devil whilst they would eat grapes. The reasoning may be indifferent, as the language is overstrained. Of this, advantage is taken to prop up the delusion which the illustrious Bishop of Hippo was exposing! For what is the theory of "*Tirush lo Yayin*" but the Manichean error in a new dress? Nor was it confined to these heretics. Theodoret, Epiphanius and Basil the Great describe other sects which maintained views about wine similar to those held by modern Teetotalers of the ultra ranks. Dr. Grindrod admits the fact, but denies the analogy, on the ground that these ancient parties were heterodox in matters of faith. Now, first, the analogy is in reference to wine, and this does not depend upon other matters. Secondly, it will be shown presently that, as in ancient so in modern times, heterodoxy in matters of faith accompanies these views.

† Two words in this verse have been subjected to no little violence. First, it is said that *μεθύσκεσθε* means *drenched* rather than "drunk;" secondly, that *ἀνωγία* means *danger*, not "excess." Now, it is certain that in the New Testament the regular word for drunkenness is *μέθη*, for drunkard *μέθυρος*, for making drunk *μεθύσκω*, and for getting drunk *μεθύω*, or, what is equivalent, the preceding word in Mid. as in our text. That *μεθύω*, in 1 Cor. xi. 21, means "plentifully fed," is the mistaken notion of Mr. Ewing in his N. T. Lexicon. But *μεθύω* compels us to no such violence. Our own version faithfully represents the original, and makes good sense, in spite of the strictures of Archdeacon Jeffreys. The Septuagint translation of Ps. xxxvi. 8 is not parallel, because wine is not in question, and the expression is certainly figurative. The Vulgate also has the same—*Inebriabunter ab inbertate domus tuæ*. Here, on the contrary, it is a question of literal eating and drinking. All admit that *μ.* may *metaphorically* mean "soaked,"

Ch. v. 1 TIMOTHY.

3. 8.—Not given to much *wine*.
5. 23.—Use a little *wine* for thy stomach's sake.

TITUS.

2. 3.—Not given to much *wine*.

REVELATION.

6. 6.—Hurt not the oil and the *wine*.
14. 8.—The *wine* of the wrath of her fornication.
10.—The *wine* of the wrath of God.
16. 19.—The *wine* of the fierceness of his wrath.
18. 2.—Drunk with the *wine* of her fornication.
18. 3.—The *wine* of the wrath of her fornication.
13.—And frankincense, and *wine*, and oil.
19. 15.—And he treadeth the *wine*-press.

§ 2. ΑΚΡΑΤΟΣ, PURE WINE.

In Rev. xiv. 10, we have the expression τοῦ κεκρασμένου ἀκράτου, more fully describing "the wine of the wrath of God." Lowth and others consider it to convey an antithesis which does not appear in our version—"the mingled unmin

"steeped," as in oil or water. Hence it may also be transferred from the effect of wine to that of passion. But all this does not in the least weaken the proper meaning of the word. Accordingly, even in 1 Cor. xi. 21, we have the same idea given in the versions of Wiclif, (1380,) Tyndal, (1534,) Cranmer, (1539,) Geneva, (1557,) Rheims, (1582,) and the authorized, (1611.) It is the same sense in John ii. 10, save in the Bible of Wiclif, who has "fulfilled." The ruler evidently *did* know the good wine from the bad: he is merely describing the custom of substituting a worse wine when men could not discern the difference. That is, the context favours the common rendering.—Next, that ἀσωτία in the New Testament, means "excess," "prodigality," "dissoluteness," is manifest. It has just the same force in classic Greek. He who has read Aristotle's Eth. Nicom. may remember the sentence (ii. 7) — περί δὲ δόσιν χρημάτων καὶ λήψιν, μεσότης μὲν ἐλευθεριότης, ὑπερβολὴ δὲ καὶ ἐλλείψις, ἀσωτία καὶ ἀνελευθερία. Not danger but waste is the thought. So in Rhet. ii., where it is contrasted with φειδῶ. This may justify our translators; though "riotousness," as given in the Rhemish, accords well with their own version of Tit. i. 6, 1 Peter iv. 4, and of a kindred word in Luke xv. 13. Wiclif translated the last clause "wherein is lechery." But to say that he understood the evil to be a property of the wine, is as unwarrantable as to say that our translators meant "the excess" to be in the first drop. Just apply this notion to 1 Tim. v. 23, and we should have the Spirit of God advising Timothy to use a little "danger," or "excess," or even worse, for his stomach's sake. Their absurdity is not the worst thing about these pseudo-criticisms. It is evident, I think, that ἀσωτία refers to μεθ. οἴνου, not to one only, but both.

gled;" that is, the figure is taken from wine *unmixed* with water to weaken, but *mixed* with drugs to increase, its strength. See § 6. The reader may compare an illustration in the Septuagint version of Ps. lxxv. 8, οἴνου ἀκράτου πλήρες κεράσματος. Here, as in Revelation, the word is an adjective, and so understood in the best translations. Since, however, it is beyond doubt used substantivally, like the Latin *merum*, in classic authors, it seems well to notice a word, which is included in most Teetotal lists of New Testament terms.

§ 3. ΓΛΕΥΚΟΣ, SWEET WINE.

ΓΛΕΥΚΟΣ appears to be used properly and ordinarily in classic Greek to denote the sweet unfermented juice of the grape. Nevertheless, it is certain, from Acts ii. 13 compared with verse 15, that this is not its New Testament sense. That a word may bear a meaning here different from what it has in classic authors is confessed. (*Temperance Topic*, pages 95, 96.) The context shows that a wine which was familiarly known to possess intoxicating properties, is meant. Mere *irony*! exclaim Dr. Lees (*M. D. Discussion*, p. 18) and Mr. Burne. (*Concordance*, pp. 100, 101.) But if the insinuation of the Jewish scoffers had been ironical, would an apostle have gravely replied, "These are *not drunken*, AS YE SUPPOSE"—not merely as ye say? Do men in these days pretend to understand the taunt bet-

ter than St. Peter did? Or if *he* be allowed to have understood, do they mean that he chose to allude to it as if he had not? Alas! what is such reasoning, if it be not taking pleasure in unrighteousness? The sense is perfectly simple to those who believe the Word of God. Mr. Burne tells us, that “no part of Scripture is better calculated to support the wine question-doctrines of Total Abstinence, than this.” It may be so; but the Christian will thence conclude how far the Bible sanctions Teetotalism, and how far such interpretations inspire him with confidence in the judgment of its advocates.

Ch. v. ACTS.

2. 13.—These men are full of *new wine*.

§ 4. ΣΙΚΕΡΑ, STRONG DRINK.

Σικερα is explained by Liddell and Scott as “a sweet fermented liquor, strong drink.” As it is clearly the Hellenistic form of שִׁכְרָא, the reader is referred to the Hebrew word. Like γλεύκος, it is found but once in the New Testament.

Ch. v. LUKE.

1. 15.—And shall drink neither wine nor *strong drink*.

§ 5. ΓΕΝΝΗΜΑ ΑΜΠΕΛΟΥ, FRUIT OF THE VINE.

To these we may add a phrase used by our Lord in Matt. xxvi. 29, Mark xiv. 25, Luke xxii. 18, τοῦ γεννήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου, “the fruit or product of the vine.” Those who consider *tirosh* to mean all vintage-fruit, treat γ. τ. ἀ. as being

synonymous with that Hebrew term. (*Market Drayton Discussion*, p. 26.) Now, every text where the Greek expression occurs gives a clear and decisive negative. The three Gospels prove that "*this fruit of the vine*" was a *liquid capable of being drunk*, not a solid, as the grape or vintage-fruit is. Yet this gross inconsistency appears, not only in the same page, but in the same line of the leading Teetotal champion! Nor is this all. The same individual, in the *Temperance Topic*, p. 130, affirms that the language of our Lord is only applicable to *old unfermented wine*, or to *raisin-wine*! Does *tirosk* mean either, even on his own scheme? or on the scheme of any body else?

Having now, expressly or tacitly, exposed the character of the principal statements, reasonings and criticisms, put forth by those who claim Scriptural support for the Teetotal Society, I would gladly close. But it is my painful duty to warn brethren in Christ, who may be here and there among them, of two baleful heresies which appear in the recent expositions of the extreme school. One is the impious folly which seeks to undermine the plenary inspiration of God's Book. They assert that Genesis e.g. is not a literal inspired history of creation, that it opens with a fable which is the vesture of great spiritual truths, that it is a book with distinct and composite elements—its Elohim and Jeho-

vah documents dovetailed in the history. (*Temp. Topic*, pp. 118-120. See Burne's *Concordance*, pp. 10-12, 78.) Hence the change of the common rendering of 2 Tim. iii. 16, without a reason or even a notice to the unsuspecting reader. Thus, the author of "Anti-Bacchus" (p. 112) silently reads "all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable,"* &c. Obviously the object is to turn the edge of the text, nay, to make it appear to sanction an error which its correct sense utterly condemns! The practical consequence also is clear. Man sits in judgment upon that word which shall judge him at the last day, and censures with various degrees of incredulity the Pentateuch of Moses, Canticles, Daniel, the Gospels, Hebrews, and the Apocalypse. *He* cannot find what *he* expects *a priori*, and at once stigmatizes such and such books as at issue with his ephemeral notions, and therefore not given by inspiration of God. That is, his poor, proud mind, constitutes itself the umpire of what God *ought to be and to reveal*, and condemns whatever is *against or above* itself!

The real question, then, is between the present day, and (not the Jews nor even Moses, but) the Holy Ghost. And what do these self-blinded men? Fairly scouting what they slightly call

* I am prepared, if this were the proper place and season, to prove that the authorized version contains the only right translation of the verse; that for the proposed alteration there is no warrant either in Scripture or (so far as I know) in any correct Greek writings; and that the Holy Ghost elsewhere, by a similar construction, owns the common rendering with approval, and shows the change to be the offspring of man's meddling semi-erudition.

the doctrine of *verbal* and *scientific* inspiration, they decidedly maintain the superior certainty of modern science; where it ventures to speak. Let us be thankful at least for their candour, and pray that God may be pleased to rouse such of His sheep as have listened to a voice far, far different from that of the good Shepherd. When men are fallen to such a depth of rationalism as to ridicule divine inspiration as divine ventriloquy, and to deny the exactness of scriptural history, which they would sublimate into a myth, it is time to remember that all men have not faith, and to shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

Still more deadly is the second heresy. It is the open denial of the divine glory of the Lord Jesus and of his atonement. One clear passage may suffice where a doctrine is so revolting and blasphemous. It occurs in a critique on a volume of Rhymes, the theology of which is characterized as execrable and immoral. On what ground? "By a gross misunderstanding of Scripture, [it] represents the God of truth as charging one man's sins upon *another*! i.e. Adam's upon us! ours upon *Adam*!! and *all* upon Jesus Christ!!! Does not God look upon things *as they are*? Deals he in legal or theological fictions?" (*Temperance Topic*, p. 136.) Most readers probably know as little as I do about these Rhymes; their doctrine may not be unexceptionably propounded, but every Chris-

tian will feel the sentiments just quoted to be the slander of an enemy upon the cross and personal honour of Him who is God over all blessed for ever. To reason upon it would suppose an amount of ignorance and indifference about the Saviour's glory, which cannot be presumed in any who really know and love Him.

Such are the doctrines of accredited advocates of Teetotalism—not of all, but of some who rank as the ablest, the most active, and the most acceptable in the society, excepting perhaps the well-known Popish priest, Father Mathew. Alas! Romanism, Infidelity, and Latitudinarianism are rapidly finding and taking common ground against all who value the doctrine of Christ. But can you, dear brethren, countenance, in any way, those who hold, publish, preach these soul-destroying errors? If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And what fellowship hath light with darkness? Remember, he that biddeth such an one God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 9-11.) To those who are still in the darkness of nature I do not address these exhortations, but to you who are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, proving what is *acceptable unto the Lord*, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS.

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ERRATA.

Page 7, line 17.—For Prov. ix. xxx. 6, read Prov. ix. xxxl. 6.

Page 44, (bis,) For אֲשִׁישִׁי עֲנָבִים read אֲשִׁישִׁי עֲנָבִים.

For Ashishah, read Ashisheh.

PAUL AT ATHENS.

ACTS XVII. 16, 17.

THE apostle had fared no better in Europe than in Asia. He was persecuted and evil-entreated in Philippi, and had to flee for his life from Thessalonica and Berea. Now he was alone in Athens, waiting for Silas and Timothy. He found no pleasure in the mother of arts, and eloquence, and philosophy. Its beauty of sculpture and statuary, its splendour of architecture, was contaminated with idolatry. As was said by a satirist, it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens; so that his spirit was stirred to its depths within him, as he beheld the city full of idols. What a sight for him who in his unrenowned days was brought up in another city which boasted that not one idol defiled it!

For Paul such boasting was now vain. He had learnt from God, and learnt it for his own soul, that there is none righteous, no, not one; none that understands, none that seeks after God. Such is God's sentence even on those under law (for there was no question of Gentile evil); that every mouth may be stopt, and all the world be under judgement to God. In short, there is no difference as to ruin; for all sinned, and fall short of

the glory of God, as he himself said by inspiration at a later day.

But the love of Christ constrained the lonely saint. The eye and altar of Greece had not a single charm for his single eye and devoted heart. What to him was the far-famed Acropolis with the gigantic statue of the tutelary goddess Pallas Athene, helmet, shield and spear gleaming in the sunlight? What the Areopagus with its dark sanctuary of the Eumenides? What the still striking temple of Theseus? What every public building, every available place, with altars dedicated to deities of besotted mankind, yea, abstractions not merely of an elevated sound, but down to Insolence and Impudence, a religious cover for all lusts, depravities, dishonours and dishonesties? They were nothing but horrors to his spirit; for they simply displayed a people that gloried in slavery to Satan, in religion so false and base as to consecrate the most shameless dissoluteness, and in the most senseless ignorance of the only true God.

Instead of being stunned by such profound iniquity and darkness, isolated as he was and valuing fellowship beyond any known to us, he looked to his Master as a faithful servant; and with unflinching courage he dared to testify Him Who, being light and love, demonstrated it by sending His Son to make Him known to Jew and Gentile. That very city compelled one of its most enquiring citizens to drink a cup of poison

for teaching the duty of heeding the monitor which God has lodged in fallen man. It was what we more rightly call conscience, but regarded by him as a sort of divinity. But on his own showing it only warned him at best against wrong, had never communicated any positive good, and evidently failed to apprise him of the folly of having a cock sacrificed to Aesculapius on his death.

Undeterred by such a fate, the apostle was led to throw himself heart and soul to make known the truth. "So he kept reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout, and in the market-place with those he met with." Alas! the ancient people of God needed the gospel, no less than the Pagans. They owned one living God: a great and blessed truth, where it has also living power. But rejecting their own Messiah, even to the death of the cross, they were now the open and extreme enemies of God and His Son. The only hope therefore, for them, "the rebellious" as their own scripture calls them, lay in confessing their fatally unbelieving error at His feet, Who suffered for sins that He might bring them to God, whiter than snow by His precious blood; for no less than this does His word assure.

Equally is the Lord Jesus the Saviour of the Gentile through faith in God's testimony to His Son. Such is the gospel, the glad tidings, of God. And we learn from the few and plain words of the inspired historian how assiduously the apostle gave himself up to the work of publishing it, the

most gracious message God ever sent to sinful guilty man. If diligent in the synagogue on the sabbath, he discoursed in the agora, or market-place, every day to those he met: deep their need, burning his zeal. The cross of Christ proved that the Jew was no better in heart than the heathen, nay, that he was worse because he turned his greater privileges to pride, and after a deadlier sort hated Messiah and God Who sent Him.

But what and where are you who read these lines? Have you profited by the darkness of the Gentile and the downfall of Israel to judge your own self? Is not all your life fitting you only for judgement and the lake of fire? Or are you setting up the wretched plea that all the world has gone wrong, and that you are no blacker than others? Will this be the smallest comfort to you in the endless punishment of hell? O the folly and the madness of turning away from Him Who speaks to you in the gospel, as He did through His bondman alike to the idolatrous Athenians, and to the Jews, with such Gentiles as found their way to the synagogue to hear the Law and the Prophets, awakened to discern the abominations of heathenism, however adorned by poetry or the fine arts.

You have privileges still greater than the Jew. You have been brought up where the New Testament is accepted as God's word, no less than the Old. You have in a general way heard of the Son of God come as the Saviour of sinners. You

have read that God sent Him that, believing on Him, you may have life eternal and everlasting redemption, without money and without price. How reckless then to go on impenitent and unbelieving! Sinners are perishing every moment: is this no warning to you no less a sinner than they?

Another apostle warns of idols still more engrossing and prevalent than those which shocked Paul at Athens. Invisible though they be, they govern the heart, and will quite as much as, or more than, those of gold, silver, or stone, graven by man's art and imagination. What are ease, pleasure, power, honour to all sorts and conditions of men, high or low? What is Mammon but the basest of false gods? Riches, more eagerly worshipped by man universally than any one or all idols together of the heathen world, as the means of gratifying every other passion and desire? Forget not the Lord's solemn word, "*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*" Who can deliver you from this innate evil but the same One Whom God raised from among the dead, Jesus the Deliverer from the wrath to come? He is equally the Deliverer from present sins and lusts to serve a living and true God, and to await Himself from the heavens.

O sinner, delay not but hear Him now speaking in His word to you personally, that the salvation of God may be yours by faith, now for your soul, then for your body at His coming again.

THE PHILOSOPHERS, EPICUREAN AND STOIC.

ACTS XVII. 18.

A NEW adversary of the gospel encountered the apostle at Athens. It was not, as at Philippi, the insidious effort of Satan through the spirit of Python, which essayed to flatter or patronise the servants of the Most High, but was spurned and cast out with holy indignation, whatever might be the enmity of disappointed selfishness and the world's persecution. Nor was it, as at Thessalonica, the old and ever active jealousy of Jewish unbelief, which took advantage of Paul's preaching the Lord's kingdom to accuse of rebellion against Cæsar. At Athens philosophers now figure for the first time, never suspending their baneful influence till its career is closed in the coming apostasy. For philosophy occupies itself with phenomena, never rises above second causes, and will not bow to God's authority revealing Himself in the written word, still less in the personal Word. It is but man's mind, without real activity of conscience or the truth.

"But some also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers assailed him. And some said, What would this chatterer say? and others, He seemeth

to be an announcer of strange demons, because he preached [or evangelised] Jesus and the resurrection."

We do not hear of the Academicians or of the Peripatetics. The schools that followed Plato and Aristotle respectively lay in the north-west and in the north-east of the suburbs. But those of Epicurus and of Zeno adjoined the market-place, where they crossed the apostle's path, and heard words of grace and truth, not only altogether new to their ears, but wholly subversive of their systems. And their systems did not emulate the idealism of Plato, nor the comprehensive earthly knowledge which was the boast of Aristotle. The Epicureans and the Stoics occupied themselves far more than the others with man's actual life of every day, opposed flatly to each other, but both utterly and directly to God's revelation of Himself in Christ.

With these the gospel preached by his ambassador came into open collision: first, Jesus in person; secondly, the resurrection. But philosophers, with all their speculative activity and lofty soarings above the vulgar, are ever apt as here to show themselves the dullest of mankind in the things of God. The Jews, spite of intense prejudice and envious hostility to a new revelation, never manifested such stupidity as this case betrayed; nor did the gross and half-barbarous Lycaonians or other heathen denizens of Asia Minor. These philosophers seem to have con-

ceived that Paul set forth Jesus and the resurrection, as two divinities, male and female, a division of the gods common to perhaps all forms of idolatry except Tsabaism.

The Epicureans were materialists and practically if not professedly Atheists, though they admitted the existence of gods taking no notice of any one. The Stoics were Pantheists, and equally excluded one true and living God with Whom every soul must have to do, but held a soul of the world as god. Chrysippus rather than Zeno of Citium formulated this school, which also held the soul to be a body and perishable; but the Soul of all things, of which the souls of animals are part, imperishable. Both denied creation; both fancied matter to be eternal. Divine judgment was equally set aside, sense of sin before God, and relationship with Him, on which really depends all moral duty. Chance, according to the Epicureans, characterises the world; Fate, according to the Stoics: the one as easy-going, as the other was severe, issuing in pleasure for the former and pride for the latter.

How completely was this learned ignorance exposed as corrupt imagination, and condemned by the glad tidings of God! When sin entered to the ruin of our first parent, He then pointed out in a rather mysterious way (till the fact explained in all simplicity) the woman's Seed Who was to crush the serpent, Satan, and deliver such as looked to Himself in faith and repentance. He had

marked out the Blesser, as the Seed of Abraham and, yet more restrictedly, of David. He had later still shut up the Saviour even more narrowly to the Son of "the Virgin" of David's house, thus clearing, seven centuries before, the unique personality of Him, Who should be truly Immanuel, God with us yet man. "Jesus" alone centres all this and more in Himself, Who was to give His life a ransom for many; Jesus, that cured the sick and raised the dead, yet hated and slain by those to whom He did nothing but good; Jesus, Who thus proved man's enmity to God, and God's love unbounded to man. For in truth by that sacrifice alone could those who believe be forgiven, receive life eternal, and be cleansed from every sin.

God had from of old testified all this by the law and the prophets. But He had recently crowned His old and written word by the new and stupendous fact, which the Lord had openly and repeatedly attested by His lips, in His resurrection from the dead. Him whom man killed God raised up again, as He in due time received Him up in glory. How blessed the tidings for all that believe! How awful the guilt of those who cleave to empty philosophy, Epicurean, Stoic, or any other!

For those it is the indifference of man, insensible of his sins, and blind to the true God Who so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son that the believer might not perish but have life eternal. For these it is the haughty self-sufficiency

which admires itself, spouts about virtue, and scorns to own the sins, and to receive a Saviour from God in Jesus. Yet He meekly bore the shame of the cross at man's hand, and God's judgement of our evil, that He might save one from his sins: alike God's grace, and His new justifying righteousness, to which His resurrection of Christ affixed a divine seal.

And now, my reader, be assured there is no other Saviour for you, or any other. You may be unlearned or a philosopher. But sin levels all to the dust of death. O through Jesus believe in God that raised Him from among the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God. There is no other way to God. As God is one, so there is but one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus Who gave Himself a ransom for all. Now God's testimony claims your faith. To the believer only is the blessing. How could it be for those who do not repent of their sins, nor receive God's glad tidings? O doubt not, delay not, but believe His word that abides for ever!

"THIS NEW DOCTRINE."

ACTS XVII. 19—21.

THE more familiar one may have been with the demoralising vanities of Greek mythology, the less one can wonder at the surprise which greeted the apostle's words in the market-place of Athens. If some were contemptuous, others were curious. Mental activity works all the more freely where conscience slumbers, and the soul is not purified by obeying the truth to unfeigned love. As political importance too had long vanished thence, quips and quiddities were their resource to fill the vacuum. "And having laid hold of him they brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would therefore know what these things may mean. (Now all Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else than either to tell or to hear last news)."

Though there was and had been for some time a remarkable scarcity of brilliant men in Athens, they had, as they boasted, a rich inheritance of the beautiful in art, of exercised and daring thought in philosophy, of finished elegance in poetry, eloquence, and history, along with utter corruption and unnatural depravity in morals, and their gods the magnified image of their own degradation.

At that time appeared Jesus the Son of God, the woman's Seed. In Him shone the light of God, and the love of God. To announce Him was indeed new teaching. He, and He only, was the perfect image of the invisible God. "He was in the world, and the world was made [brought into being] by Him, and the world knew Him not." How besotted was the world! how vain, useless, blinding was its wisdom! The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib. But the world in its highest civilisation knew not its own Creator. And no wonder. It had long stumbled on in the darkness of evil and of gods that were only demons.

But the Jews? They were no better; they were even guiltier. "He came to His own things, and His own people received Him not." They had the law and the prophets, and John the Baptist to prepare His way. But their will was engaged against Him. They would have relished a Messiah to put down the Romans and to set Israel at the head of all the nations. This will be when He comes again in power and glory. But He with God made it the first work to save sinners. What would be the worth of His kingdom if sin were not first atoned for? A lowly, gracious, holy, and suffering Messiah was hateful to their proud hearts, because He was infinitely better and higher than they had conceived, and they themselves immeasurably worse.

Philosophy had never found out that "in the

beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It never learnt even that when man was made, he and every thing around him were "very good;" still less that he is fallen under sin, and the creature subjected to man, like man, under the power of death. It was to meet this state of sin and ruin that, when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under law, that He might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship.

What had this to do with science unable to rise above causes and effects? and, when pursued to its utmost height, finding only a blank wall which it cannot pass? So acknowledged one of earth's sages just departed. Science cannot get beyond phenomena, and the general laws deduced from them. Science is but the classification of what exists and the discovery of what the philosophers are pleased to call nature's "laws." But Who produced the phenomena and imposed those laws? There it is blind and dumb; and the utmost it confesses is the existence of primordial facts or causes, of which it can give no account. And why not? Because they point to the First Cause, the Uncaused One, Who is the cause of all secondary causes. But this men refuse, and prefer to remain Agnostics, strange stronghold of the pride of knowledge. "The world [not by folly only, but also] by wisdom knew not God."

Yea, there was the awful sight of man with all his pride bowing down to his own handiwork,

idols of metal or stone, in blank ignorance of the true and living God Who had sent His Son to die for sinners and rescue all who believe from the present evil age. Is He the only potentate, the alone Good, King of kings and Lord of lords, Who must not punish rebellion? And is it not plain and deadly rebellion against Him to worship, as they were doing, false gods? and gods so vile!

But He is love; and He has proved it by sending His Son to become man (while always God), that He might suffer for sins, and thus save all sinners that submit to Him. To the acceptance of this, the only efficacious sacrifice, God has borne witness by raising the crucified Saviour from the dead. Hear it, ye who are under the spell of haughty scientists. The risen Jesus testifies to His Father's glory, and to the love He is showing even to His worst enemies that repent. If His own birth of the virgin is wholly above the sphere of causes and effects, much more His resurrection proclaims that God acts in that power equal to His love, and righteously interposes to save all that believe. Not even a philosopher could argue that death is the cause of resurrection. No, it is *God* that raises the dead; and He it is Who in the gospel announces these glad tidings that you may believe, and, though a lost sinner, be saved by His grace.

Yes, the gospel is "new doctrine;" and the truth of God is of all things strangest to fallen man—stranger far than fiction.

AN "UNKNOWN GOD."

ACTS XVII. 22, 23.

IN the vast throng of strange gods at Athens the discerning eye of the apostle observed an altar with an inscription which unconsciously acknowledged the ruined estate, not only of its inhabitants, but of all the heathen world. Not that they thereby intended a humbling admission; yet the words told the fact to him who knew the truth. It appears from adequate witnesses that there were several altars thus inscribed. Paul certainly saw one, and spoke accordingly. In their grossly polytheistic zeal they devoted shrines, not only to all home and foreign deities, but to unknown gods, that not one should miss due honour. This furnished Paul with his plea; and how immeasurably superior to the Apology of Socrates is the appeal of the "apostle of nations!"

"And Paul stood amidst the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, in all things I behold you more [than others] in awe of divinities (dæmons). For coming through and beholding your objects of worship, I found also an altar on which had been inscribed, TO AN (OR, THE) UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye reverence without knowing, this *I* announce to you."

Grace with single eye laid hold of what was true, to reach conscience and judge the false. No introducer of strange divinities was the apostle, but made known the God whom this altar openly acknowledged to be "unknown." Which of them could deny that the gods of Olympus, the most honoured in their midst, were by their own account the most arbitrary, corrupt, and violent personages within their ken, and afforded to their devotees a basis not of morality but of the vilest and even unnatural indecency? And if this was the religion of the multitude, kept up by sacerdotal selfishness and sanctioned for state-craft by politicians, what had proud or sceptical philosophers done? Nothing but aggravate the evil by vain efforts to reconcile a world of sin, sorrow, and death with a feeble god, with gods unavailing or indifferent, who left it for guilty presumptuous men to make progress and improve things here below.

For not one of their divinities claimed to be eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent in self-being. Not one of them said, I AM, or was ever said to be Light morally, or Love in the energy of his nature. Yet there is in every human being, unless he be drunk with superstition or fatally poisoned by scepticism, what has been called God-consciousness, and is forced to own, that God there must be. And though no one could by searching find out His nature; yet when presented to man by revelation, his conscience owns that these at-

tributes and this nature are alone worthy of Him.

What then makes the insurmountable difficulty? That little word, but awful, personal, and universal reality, SIN. Yet it alone accounts for the ruin, the confusion, the darkness, the uncertainty, and the misery for man everywhere. And what is it for a good, and holy, and righteous God? Bible or no Bible, a world wicked and wretched is a fact before all. But it is a notion worthy of the arch-enemy that the eternal God made it as it is; it negatives all just thought of His goodness, wisdom, and power. That it fell into its actual condition through the transgression of its head is the sole reasonable key, as the Bible distinctly declares it to have been the simple fact. Idolatry and philosophy only added to the mischief by denying the good state which a faithful Creator made to hinge on the obedience of the first man. For man was constituted and tried as a moral being. But they do still worse; they lead men to disbelieve in the Second man, Who being God came in the light and love of God to save all who believe on Him; and Who, also becoming man, died as the one efficacious sacrifice for the sins, and rose for the justification, of those who repent and believe the glad tidings. O how worthy of God and His Son!

Man from the first departed from God, Who left him to feel his exile from the paradise of Adam, though not without both sentence of judgement and a revelation of a suffering Deliver-

er, the woman's Seed. But the race willingly, contentedly, did without His presence and favour, save a few men of faith; and the rest gave themselves up to corruption and violence, till He intervened by the deluge which swept them all away. Only Noah and his sons, and their wives, with animals clean and unclean, were saved in the ark; and the present age began. But it was soon marked not only by fresh institutions of God, but by a new evil. As the apostle tells us, "Knowing God, they glorified him not as God, nor were thankful; but fell into folly in their thoughts, and their unintelligent heart was hardened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds and quadrupeds and reptiles. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness." It is his holy account of paganism, and of its utter absence of truth, piety, and moral decency.

Such was Athens, with an unknown God. Such were heathen men who through faith of Christ turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God made known to them in His Son, the risen Saviour. Believing on Him, it was not pardon only they received, but life eternal: the basis of a new nature and walk, seen and made known by chosen and inspired witnesses. Some were as dark and dissolute as any in Athens or Corinth, to whom the apostle wrote after they believed, "But ye were washed, but ye were

sanctified, but ye were justified." How was this wondrous change? In virtue of what? "In the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Thus is God known in His Son and by His Spirit, as scripture abundantly testifies. Take our Lord's few words in John xvii. 3: "This is life eternal, to know thee [the Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send." O turn not away from such grace and truth, but "believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

THE GOD THAT MADE THE WORLD.

ACTS XVII. 24.

CREATION is a great truth, which unbelief never recognised. It seems not to have been denied among men before the Deluge, though of no value or effect because of their growingly vile condition. Scripture implies that idolatry sprung up after that solemn judgement of God. They were without excuse; because the things that are made, the very reverse of a development, pointed to the invisible, His everlasting power and divinity; and also because when they knew God externally and without dispute, they glorified Him not as God, and were not thankful. Such guilty indifference led them into folly which their darkened heart accounted wisdom; so that they exchanged the truth of God for the lie of the great enemy, and honoured and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed for ever. Amen. The shameful lusts before became shameless afterwards; and no sadder proof could be asked than Athens then presented to a godly and discerning eye. They even gloried in their shame.

With admirably delicate tact the apostle, in making known an unknown God, begins with the miracle whose effect is before all eyes, in spite of

the disorder everywhere through the fall. Instead of being an announcer of strange dæmons, he was the first, at their own invitation to the Areopagus, to assert gravely, graciously, and with all plainness of speech the rights of the one true God. When they themselves sought or at least asked to know what this new doctrine meant, how little they expected such a simple and noble testimony carrying its own self-evidencing power to every unbiassed conscience!

"The God that made the world and all things that are in it, he being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made by hands." Every clause, every word one might say, undermined paganism without a syllable justly to offend. The grand yet elementary truth left no room for the myths of priests and poets, or for the reasonings of sages in pitch darkness. The remarkable fact is that none of the jarring leaders of religion or philosophy claimed for their gods, home or foreign or unknown, to have made the world and all things that are therein. They attributed that wonderful work neither to any one approaching supremacy, nor to all working together in respective spheres to that common end. So far they unwittingly told the truth. The dæmons had nothing to do with making the world, or any one of the things that are in it. The true God whom they knew not made them all.

They had their varied dreams. But their schemes as to the origin of all around and above

and beneath, their cosmogonies, so called, are but one speculation more absurd than another. The only rare resemblance to the facts is found in whatever bit of early tradition they might adopt which lingered in men prone to forget. The prevalent idea of the philosophers is eternal matter. So pantheism ruled for ages in India, whence it spread south and west, more and more, as it grows now in Europe and America. Brahm or God had no personality, and hence no creation could be, but the Darwinian development idol. The wretched details of emanation which made polytheism a necessary result are not worth refuting or repeating.

What a contrast are those dark and foul vapours with the clear light of scripture and creation, brief yet adequate before man, with ample and interesting and all-important accounts when the earth was formed, and he was ushered into a scene which was equally suited to prove God's beneficence and to furnish the proper sphere for man's responsibility. The apostle here states, without controversy, the fact which delivered from human dreams derogatory to the truth.

Nor is the God that made all only a Creator. He is Lord of heaven and earth. His authority is constant everywhere. Fallen man writhes under this truth, because it at once appeals to conscience. As a man, I am His creature, and by that tie necessarily His servant. Am I doing His will? Am I pleasing Him as the motive of my life? But now I am a fallen man, departed from Him, and

I like to do my own will, though knowing it is opposed to His. But if He is Lord of heaven and earth, He must call me to account for my mis-doing; and what and where must be my portion, especially if I go as I am? He could not be the good and holy and righteous, as He must be as the true God, if He were indifferent to His own honour, and to His creature's dishonour, habitual too as it is.

He does "not dwell in temples made with hands." So implied the prophet Isaiah to those who rested on that boon in their midst, soon to fall. So Stephen precisely said; and Paul who then heard with unbelieving ears now proclaimed it in faith and love to the Athenians more devoted than any on earth to that show in honour of the dæmons that consecrated every vile lust. Will the Lord of heaven and earth endure or pass by such iniquity? Will He not execute judgement not only on the dæmons but on their votaries because of their rebellion against Himself?

Therefore it was that the apostle had preached Jesus and the resurrection in the busy haunts of men, before they hied to the Areopagus. Therefore it was that God was sending to all mankind the glad tidings of a dead and risen Saviour. The God that made the universe, the Lord of heaven and earth, Who dwells not in temples made with hands, deigns to look on one that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembling at His word. His goodness leads the sinner to repentance; and

where shone His goodness as in Jesus? It was this that attracted the woman that was a sinner; it was this that won the hard robber to penitence and faith on the cross; it was this that overwhelmed Paul the crusader of law into the most lowly saint and sufferer for Himself.

This is the One that is now announced to you. If you, who have no righteousness fit for God, have not yet submitted to the righteousness of God in Christ, your need, your danger, is as real as that of the Athenians. O look to Jesus, the life, the life eternal, that you may live to God now and ever more. The gospel is not only remission of sins to every one that believes, but life through Christ's name. He that suffered for the sins of every believer is the giver of life eternal now, and will raise him up at the last day.

THE SELF-SUFFICING GIVER OF ALL THINGS TO ALL.

"Nor is he served by human hands as needing something, himself giving to all life and breath and all things.—Acts xvii, 25.

THE God unknown at Athens, as everywhere else among the nations, the apostle first made known, as the maker of the world and of all things therein. Even this man soon gave up. He heeded not the evidence of His everlasting power and divinity in the world of creation. He forgot the traditional knowledge which all had at first, weary of glorifying Him, and unthankful for His mercies. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into nature worship, and next into deified humanity if we so may call the chief object of their adoration invested with sex and the like human properties. The multiplicity of religions attested the loss of the one true God: no splendour of image or of temples could hide but only publish the imposture. How circumscribe the Omnipresent Lord of heaven and earth within man's work?

Next in verse 25 witness is borne not to His creative majesty alone but to His goodness. "Nor is he served by human hands as needing

something, himself giving to all life and breath and all things." In these respects too God was an unknown God to the heathen world. They thought Him morally such a one as themselves. Their conviction was that the gods had no pleasure in man's happiness, but rather in casting down the exalted and reversing the prosperous. Thus none was to be called blessed till his life came unscathed to an end.

The apostle set before the Athenians One who, good in Himself, does good actively, even in the world out of course as it is now, since man's fall brought in sin and death universally. Yet He who needs nothing for Himself makes His sun rise on evil and good, and sends rain on just and unjust. Nor has He left Himself without witness in doing good, and giving from heaven fruitful seasons, and filling hearts with food and gladness. So it was among all the nations whom in times past He suffered to go in their own ways of ignoring Him: He gives to all life and breath and all things. How simple and self-evidencing the plain fact to make known the God whom confessedly they knew not! What a contrast with all the false gods (the real dæmons) of the world who debased their devotees to their own rebellious evil and mischievous selfishness, enabling also their priests to prey on the guilty fears of mankind.

The true God gives to all life and breath and all things. Even in a ruined world this active beneficence went out impartially. He makes the grass

grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, to bring forth bread out of the earth, and wine that gladdens man's heart, making his face shine—shine more than with oil; and with bread he strengthens man's heart. He makes darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest creep forth, the young lions roaring for their prey, and to seek their food from God. The sun rises: they retreat, and lay⁹ them down in their dens. Man goes forth to his work and to his labour till the evening. How manifold are Thy works, O Jehovah; in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches. They all look to Thee, that Thou mayest give them food in its season; Thou givest them, they gather; Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled; Thou takest away their breath, they expire and return to their dust. What a comment is Psalm civ. on God's sustaining goodness!

Yet Athens had little ear to hear though the truth carried its proof to every unbiassed ear. The apostle was cut short on Areopagus. The pleasures of sin monopolised his hearers in general. God's judgement was an intolerable idea. Let us eat and drink, talk and laugh; for to-morrow we die. But God is not mocked. Nor is man a mere animal with higher mental capacity than the brute, but made in God's image, after His likeness. The Judge of all "formed" him alone of earth's denizens, and breathed into his nostrils the breath

of life, man only having his soul in immediate association with Him as His moral governor, and in direct responsibility to Him in his peculiar nature and place. Whatever men shamelessly speculate, no beast has a conscience toward God, as man has, drug or deny it as he may. Hence infinite compassion flowed to man in his sin and ruin.

He who was God but became man, the woman's Seed, deigned to be the unparalleled gift of divine love, that lost man might believe and be saved. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him shall have life eternal. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes on Him becomes a child and a son of God; and if so, he receives the gift of the Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, crying Abba, Father.

No doubt that the new relationship creates fresh wants. But God is ever the same bounteous giver; and if He be for us, who against us? He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him grant us all things? Who shall lay charge against God's elect? It is God that justifies: who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea but rather that was raised up, who is also at God's right hand, who also intercedes for us: who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? According as it is written,

For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we were reckoned as sheep for slaughter. But in all these things we more than conquer through Him that loved us. Truly every good gift, and every perfect giving, comes down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation or shadow of turning.

Why then should you, my reader, if you have never yet believed, die in your sins? Why longer yield to the destruction and bondage and lie of Satan against the Saviour God? The truth alone can and will set you free. Behold and believe on the Son; He shall set you free, and you too be truly free.

EVERY NATION FROM ONE SOURCE, AND UNDER GOD'S CONTROL.

"And of one [blood] he made every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having defined ordained seasons and the bounds of their dwelling." Acts xvii. 26.

THE apostle next adverted to the providential arrangement for man as he is over the earth. If men departed from God so as not to know Him, as they assuredly desired not the knowledge of His ways, it might have been thought that the origin of nations was not utterly forgotten. But man readily lets slip what humbles him, as he accepts or invents the fable of moral progress, because it humours his vanity. Nor was any part of the race more inflated with self-satisfaction than the Greeks who then heard of the true God, not only in His creative and sustaining goodness, but in His forming those communities called "nations."

After the deluge, sent judicially to sweep away a generation corrupt and filled with violence, sacrifice was made the ground on which the world that now is was set. The principle of government too was introduced; "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Flesh, not the herb only, was now free for his food, but not the blood, reserved for God to whom life belongs.

But the renewed earth saw man renewing his iniquities. Even Noah the governor failed to govern himself, and disappeared from further notice, as Adam after the fall. As men journeyed from the east they found a plain in the land of Shinar where they decided to dwell, instead of replenishing the earth as they had been enjoined. Their device was to centralise by erecting a city and a tower, and make themselves a name, for God was in none of their thoughts, lest they should be scattered. Union was strength; and they would be independent. But Jehovah scattered them abroad by the new, simple, and effective means of confounding their mutual communications by differing tongues; for hitherto the whole earth was of one lip and of one speech.

Thus, instead of a vast commonwealth of all mankind, the divine Governor brought about man's dispersion first, and at length in Peleg's day the division of the earth. Whatever might come by migration or resolution, the nations after their families and tongues occupied their lands to the apostle's day and to ours. God is not mocked.

"And of one [blood] he made every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having defined ordained seasons and the bounds of their dwelling."

So the prophets from Moses to Malachi, confirmed by the New Testament, declare that the King of kings and Lord of lords at His coming in power and glory will judge them *as nations* in

their respective measures before the eternal judgment, not only the dead works individually, but the secrets of darkness and the counsels of hearts. Compare for the former Deut. xxxii. 41—43, xxxiii. 26—29; Pss. ii. 5, 9—12, ix. 8, 9, 15—20, x. 16—18, xlv. 4, 5, xlvi. 4—7, lxxvi. 10—12, cx. 2, 5, 6, cxlix. 6—9; Isa. ii. 10—22, xiii. 6, 11, xiv. 26, xvii. 12—14, xxiv. 1, 21—23, xxvi. 9—11, xxix. 5—7, xxxiv., lxiii. 1—6, lxvi. 15—16; Jer. xxv. 30—33; Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.; Dan. ii. 44, 45, vii. 23—27; and even more pointedly if possible in the twelve shorter Prophets, in particular Joel iii. 1, 2, 9—14; Obad. 15—21; Micah iv. 11—13, vii. 15—20; Nahum i. 2—6; Hab. ii. 13, 14, iii. 12, 13; Zeph. iii. 8, 19, 20; Hag. ii. 6, 7, 22; Zech. ix. 13, 14, x. 3—9, xiv. 1—4; Mal. iv. 1—3.

Vain imaginations can alter neither facts nor His control who will soon prove that, whatever the wicked rebellion of man, He works all things after the counsel of His own good and holy will. All the nations sprang from one forefather—all were involved in common sin, as ignorant of God as of themselves. Death from the first entered for parents and progeny. None can dispute that so it is now. The Athenians to their great loss knew not why it was. Revelation alone explained how sin came in; and happy he who on God's authority believes it and looks to the only Deliverer. Man could ruin but not save himself. Yet is it by His Son become man, Christ Jesus, that God righteously saves the chief of sinners, but only on his faith,

not surely in his unbelief ; for faith honours God, and the Son no less than the Father.

It is true that all nations from their rise forgot God, and that no one manifested the evil more than those to whose conscience the apostle was appealing. Notwithstanding their willing ignorance, God interested Himself in their actual circumstances, defining the appointed seasons of their national life, progress and fall, with the bounds of their dwelling. Their fresh trial as world-powers, on the ruin of Israel and Judah, only eventuated in greater pride, in compulsory idolatry, and in persecution of such as clung to the confession of the true God who had ordained them to rule.

Thus we see the prophet Jonah sent even before the catastrophe of the chosen people to the capital of the Assyrians ; and the correction of the narrow selfishness which never appreciates goodness to the bad outside its own limits. God on the contrary would let His warning fall in presence of repentance. But as this touched the self-importance of the messenger, he fled till humbled by God's mighty hand. Even then in his fear that divine mercy might arrest judgement, he sulked till he took to heart the moral of the withered gourd that had sheltered him from the burning sun, and wrote the tale of his own folly, and of the pity that delighted to spare a mourning city of Gentiles, "wherein are more than six score persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their

left hand ; and also much cattle." Such was the God that Israel little knew, and the heathen not at all.

If it be so in only the seen and the temporal, how much more does His goodness in Christ extend to sinners, in view of man's loss of relation to Himself and its everlasting consequences ! For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and forfeit his own self ? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? Only what God gives and does can save the lost. None but the Only-begotten Son of God has life to bestow on the dead in sins when they have heard His voice. None but the Son of Man on the cross could avail to bear God's judgement of sin. Do you not know that Himself tells you so, that believing on Him you may not perish but have life eternal ? What then clearer than that the Lord Jesus is the object of faith ? Him the sinless One God made sin for us, who were His enemies, whether Jews or Greeks.

How plainly then salvation is not of works but of faith, that it might be according to grace, God's grace, not ours. Thus it avails for Gentiles in all their deadly ignorance and evil, equally as for Jews in their high-minded pride as to the law which only condemned them. Grace in Christ opens the blind eyes to see and judge self with all its sins, and the dumb lips to bless the God who commends His own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. What has not God meant and found and given to the believer in that

death? What does it not proclaim in the gospel to every lost creature? Thus it is that God has answered human distrust and disobedience and ruin by giving His best and unspeakable gift to save His worst foes, and make them through faith in His Son to love and serve Him who first loved them with a sovereign and creative love only possible to Himself.

TO SEEK GOD.

"To seek God, if indeed they might feel after and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." Acts xvii. 27.

THE diversity of nations gave the heathen of old, as it gives the unbelieving now, occasion to deny the unity of the race. But God made of one (blood) every nation of men to dwell on every face of the earth, whatever local traditions aver, whatever the dreams of early poets or of later philosophers or geographers. Man readily forgot himself, as well as God. If God was unknown, so was man's origin and creation: the very formula of *si deo, si deae*, betrayed his ignorance. Religiousness is natural even to the most corrupt of mankind; faith acceptable to God is supernatural. Superstition suits the devil not less than scepticism. Neither pleases God, who never left man that left Him, as he was justly banished by Him but not without the testimony of creation without and of conscience within.

Hence the apostle by the simple statement of divinely attested facts sets aside alike a multitude of independent deities and of independent nations derived from these Satanic impostors. He asserts one true God and one common race, whose fears, with independence of God and self-centering confidence in man, and means of effecting it in direct opposition to God's declared will, brought on dispersion by the different languages in their

lands, after their tongues, their families, and their nations. For up to the deluge mankind was but one community, and, whatever their growing corruption and violence, no strange gods were set up against God. Nor had God inaugurated government as a human institution having authority from Him. When He did, it was left neither to fate nor to chance, but He determined the seasons, and the limits of their dwelling. Job xii. 23, &c. from early days shows how distinctly this was known by those who had the fear of God; and Deuteronomy xxxii. 8 goes even beyond what the apostle declared to the Athenians.

But providential disposal of the nations was far from all His care. He felt graciously for every soul of man, who in losing Him had lost the only and the necessary centre for the heart, and the basis for all true morality, of which known relationship to Him must be the corner-stone. This is touched in verse 27 as His great aim for them individually—"to seek God,* if haply they might feel after and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." For man was fallen from God, and sin reigned in death; and thus death passed upon all men, for that all sinned. The sad fact is patent and undeniable. But God remained the God of goodness and mercy, ready to hear and forgive. But man must seek Him,

* "The Lord," as in the Authorised Version is a bad reading: "God" is in the best copies, and required by the truth intrinsically. What had the nations to do with "Jehovah"? What could they know of Him whom God made Lord and Anointed?

conscious of sin, misery, and darkness. Hence God from the garden of Eden held out to guilty man, even before he was expelled as an inexcusable rebel, the hope of a Deliverer from the power of Satan, and, O what grace ! to be born of woman, though the woman drew the man into her disobedience.

From the day of man's departure from God, one must seek God in grace and by grace. God uses means of all kinds to exercise the conscience as well as attract the heart. And He whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ was ever the object of faith in some true way, however small the measure. God's goodness leads to repentance. The grace of Christ emboldens the weary and burdened sinner to confess his sins to God ; and now that He is come, all is deepened and sure by the glad tidings of His grace. Even for the Jewish saints much was lacking which is now revealed in the gospel : how much less did poor benighted souls among the nations apprehend ? Yet there were Gentiles who believed throughout the law ; and we see in the book of Job believers before the law who were not of Israel. We may enter into the apostle's cautious language, "if haply [or indeed] they might feel after and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." Compared with the gospel after Christ's work, it was groping in the dark, save at least where the True Light was shining.

In every case of real conversion to God faith

supposes the sinner brought to judge himself and own his sins to God, to renounce self-defence and to cast himself on God's grace in Christ. It was this grace that secretly drew, hindered despair, and sustained faith in the face of the most varied and serious difficulties; to know what God has wrought for the sinner in Christ's death and resurrection brings the believer into solid and abiding peace. But even before the Son of God came, and gave us an understanding to know Him that is true, God was not far from each one. If He interests Himself in a nation and its king and the meanest subject, if He will call into account national responsibility, as well as every soul that comes into judgement at the close, how He yearned over every troubled soul that sought Him! He that counts every hair of the believer's head and takes notice of each sparrow that falls took deep concern in the perplexed Gentile who hated his sins, and yet turned to God about them: it might be through the slightest gleam of the Light of men. No, He was not far from each one then; and now we hear the fullest clearest testimony that there is no difference of Jew and Greek; for the same Lord of all is rich toward all that call upon Him. "The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from out of the dead, thou shalt be saved."

IN HIM WE LIVE.

"For in him we live and move and are; as also some of the poets among you have said, For we are also his offspring." Acts xviii. 28.

NOT in ourselves, but in Him do men exercise their activity, and have their being when they no longer live and move as in their existence here below. Death that closes all for every other animated creature on earth does not close man's being. Through one man, Adam, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, its present wages, but only in part, before its full payment, judgement, everlasting judgement. This is the second death, neither the first nor the second being extinction; for not only does man's soul exist for ever, but the Son of God shall call from the tomb both those that have done good to a resurrection of life, and those that have done ill to a resurrection of judgement: an unchangeable state respectively of bliss or of woe. So says the word of God: how bright for the believer, and how unutterably solemn for him that rejects the Father and the Son!

It is intelligible in a physical point of view to describe man as the sole species of his genus, and the sole representative of his order. But the apostle rises far above the natural philosophy, and regards him in his relation to God, and with that consciousness of it, which no other animated being on earth possesses. This the great enemy of God

and man seeks to darken, if he cannot destroy it; but as revealed truth asserts that relation in the clearest terms, so the echo of it was heard even where the true God was not known. Hence the apostle could cite from Greeks themselves, centuries before he spoke: "As also some of the poets among you have said, For we are also his offspring." These precise words occur in the astronomical poem of Aratus, a Cilician like himself, the *Phænomena*, extant to this day, and again with but one letter different, in the Stoic Cleanthes' hymn to Zeus, also extant.

It is so far infidelity, and very low infidelity, to doubt that man has an immortal soul. As to him only God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the skies, and over the cattle, and over the whole earth, and every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth. And God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Think of so exceptional a dignity given to man. But there is more in Genesis ii. 7, where relationship is treated, and not creation only. "And the LORD God formed man, dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Compare it with Genesis i. 24: "Let the earth bring forth living souls after their kind; cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, after their kind." Into none but man did Jehovah Elohim breathe

the breath of life. He is thus doubly distinguished from the rest of creation subjected to him as head, and alone brought into relationship with Him who inbreathed. Hence his soul had, by its constitution apart from grace and a new life, an association with God morally, peculiar to man. And he alone, while favoured beyond all, had a test of obedience applied in Paradise. Such a creature was responsible to obey God and must give an account to Him. Think of a horse or cow, a dog or a cat, levelled up to man's position, or man levelled down to theirs! Is it not rank insubjection to God's word? The sensuous and sensual Egyptians did not sink so low; they doubted not the soul's existence after death, and a future judgement, however crude and debased by their deification of the powers of nature.

Yes, in God man lives, moves, and is of quite another sort than those creatures whose soul is as evanescent as their bodies, and has no moral link with God. Man, no doubt, shares with them the "dust of the ground;" but even so, his position is naturally erect, his eye looks up, not down, his hand is unique as Sir C. Bell proved, to suit a soul and spirit and even a body peculiar to the race, to fill a responsible relationship with God, or the consequence of rebellion against Him. Hence in scripture "mortal" is never said of the soul, but of the body. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," has a quite different force, and means the person, the living human being, because the individuality

lies in the soul, and led to such common phrases as "all the souls," etc., in Genesis xlii. 15, 18, 22, 25, 26, 27. They were God's offspring, and so were the Athenians, though pagans, because all mankind shares the relationship, even if they make the grossest use of their natural privilege, deny their responsibility, reject the glad tidings of God's grace in Christ, and become objects of His judgement.

How then is it with you who read these words? Grace, God's grace, in Christ can alone save you, a guilty and lost sinner. Life for you, whose old life is forfeited through sin, is nowhere but in the Son; and now is proclaimed to sinners everywhere and of every sort, but only to such as believe God about His Son. Do you speak of your sins as fearful, and your state as an active source of evil in His sight? It is sadly true; but I rejoice if you own it humbly, frankly, and fully to God. Confess your sins to Him who sent His Son as propitiation for our sins, whose blood cleanseth the believer from every sin. It was He, not you, that paid redemption's price, a price beyond the value of all worlds, the precious blood of God's Son, God's Lamb. What could you offer as a sinner but sins? Are you not altogether sin in your nature as it is? So His word declares: what are your words, your thoughts, your feelings? Redemption lies wholly in the worth and work, not of the redeemed, but of the Redeemer.

Beware of bolstering your case on God's natural

Fatherhood. Were not the head fallen and the race sinful, this might plead for living and against death. But as you are, you need a new and eternal life and an everlasting redemption; and the Saviour God of all grace calls you to receive both by faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus.

THE DIVINE.

"Being therefore God's offspring, we ought not to think the divine is like gold or silver or stone, graven by man's art and thought." Acts xvii. 29.

MEN are God's offspring, not because they have a body, as all animals have, nor even a soul and spirit, as they too have, suited to their place and function in creation, but because they have an inner man direct from God by His inbreathing. This we know, as no Athenians did, and as not a few Christians forget, from the only reliable account in Genesis ii. 7: "and Jehovah Elohim formed man [of] dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," or person. This assuredly explains why of all on earth man alone has an immortal soul for good or for ill beyond calculation, and why he must give account to God. But here the apostle used this relationship (from the peculiarity of the immaterial part of his nature) to prove the folly of an idolatrous image to represent God. No doubt, man's body was formed in divine wisdom with a view to the soul and spirit communicated by a subsequent and intimate act of Jehovah Elohim in giving him only the inner man from His own breath. From this fact flows his moral relationship to God; and he alone of earth's beings has it.

But this fact refutes the irrationalism of idol (or image) worship of God. For it is in the immaterialism of his nature that man is thus God's

offspring. His soul and spirit only are from God's inbreathing; and in this he stood alone here below. Therefore, as urged, "we ought not to think the divine is like gold or silver or stone, graven by man's art and thought." The sculpture of these material substances by man's skill and imagination only adds absurdity to absurdity. For the material was but a creature of God; and the shape given to each was man's fancy and manufacture. "God is a spirit," and so can be omnipresent, as man's conscience bears witness to His penetrating energy throughout all mankind, unless stupefied by sin and infidelity, which drown thought of Him. But He is behind all ineffaceably, though Satan poses as the god of the world, deifying men's lusts to gratify them, and the pride of deceased ancestors, and the powers of nature above and below, as he works by demons who personate the various national divinities which are but names to deceive.

But there is a true and perfect image of the invisible God, Jesus the Lord, not only unknown to the Greek and the nations universally, but unwelcome to the Jew in his unbelief, Who revealed God in His essence and attributes and relationship of Father, as He the eternal Word and Son knew Him; Who brought God nigh to man in His life and service, and brought nigh to God all who believe, be they Jew or Gentile. To this end He is, as He must be, both true God, and perfect man, in one Person. And He is the

only safe-guard from false gods and from idols, from idols of the mind no less than material images. He too is the one mediator of God and men, Christ Jesus, not only God but man; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony in its own times, when Jew and Gentile condemned themselves as reprobates and lost sinners by condemning the only Righteous One and hating the God who sent His Son in saving grace.

O what a contrast between the enemy deifying sinful men and their fears and passions and their ideas of vanity, with real demons unseen becoming thus objects of worship; and God the Father giving the Christian fellowship with Himself and His Son by the Holy Ghost! Therein is God kept in His own supreme place, and man, believing man, put into his true position of dependence and subjection, yet brought even now into the relationship of His child in all the confidence of His perfect love which has cast out all fear through our Lord Jesus. All other images are but the shameless rivals of the great enemy's hatred of Him; the resuscitated spawn of Paganism, which the Lord vanquished in the seeming defeat of His cross, when He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them publicly, leading them in triumph by it. And to what is Christendom returning but homage to these spectres of darkness, as the Jews will shortly in these last days, before grace creates the "generation to come?"

REPENTANCE ENJOINED.

"The times however of ignorance God overlooked, but now enjoineth men that all everywhere repent." Acts xvii. 30.

THE apostle refers to "the times of ignorance" before the gospel came, not only to believers personally, but also in all the world bearing fruit and growing. It was an immense change for Gentiles as such, predicted by Simeon as he held the infant Saviour in his arms and said, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou preparedst before the face of all the peoples, a light for revelation of Gentiles [or nations], and glory of thy people Israel." Israel's glory is postponed because of their unbelief, but Christ meanwhile is a light for unveiling Gentiles till Israel's heart turns to the Lord when he shall be saved.

Thus for a season the old condition is reversed. The chosen people who had the only religious privileges enjoyed on earth lost them for their rejection of their own Messiah; and "Be it known therefore to you, that this salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles; they also will hear." Accordingly too he wrote to the saints in Rome (the then Gentile metropolis), "By their fall [there is] salvation to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. But if their fall [be the] world's wealth, and their

loss Gentiles' wealth, how much more their fulness?" And so the fulness of Israel will prove under the Messiah and the new covenant. Truly it will be the glory of His people Israel when their brightest hopes are more than realised, and the earth shall yield her increase, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him, yea, the whole earth shall be filled with His glory.

Here the apostle confines himself to the fact that God, instead of executing judgement on the times of deplorable and inexcusable ignorance, in His goodness overlooked the past, and now calls to repentance. It was no longer the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea; it was no longer the Twelve sent only to the lost sheep of Israel's house, and expressly not into a way of Gentiles nor into a city of Samaritans. Now that the rejected Christ died as propitiation and was raised up, He Himself marks the change now come: "Go therefore, make disciples of all the Gentiles;" "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all the creation;" "Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the Gentiles, beginning with Jerusalem," the guiltiest of all on earth!

How true it is that the message of God's love in salvation to every one that believes is His own command! The apostle (himself called as apostle of Gentiles by the Lord from heaven) was then

acting as His ambassador, when he proclaimed to the Athenians that "God now enjoineth men that all everywhere repent." The Gentiles who ignored the true God, and set up idols to His dishonour and their own shame, are no more ignored of God. "The true light already shineth." Coming into the world it lightens every man. It is true that the world was so blind as not to know Him. But the God of all grace does not leave them to their folly; He sends this charge to them, that they should "all everywhere repent." What compassion for and concern in "all everywhere"!

No sinner, no child of fallen man, had ever turned to God in faith as all did from Abel downward without repentance. It is faith that produces it if real and Godward, though it may not be yet for many souls faith in the glad tidings. But faith in God's word invariably causes it; and its character is self-judgement before Him. Not only one's ways, but one's self, is laid naked as seen by His holy eyes with whom we have to do.

Without doubt, there is a changed and new mind about God, which is rather the effect of faith; but this in itself is never repentance. For repentance is by grace the soul's eye turned on itself and seeing only and continually its guilt, its evil. Faith which produces repentance is in no way repentance; it looks away from self to Christ for the remission of the sins which repentance condemns, and condemns one's self for without an excuse before God.

Feeble faith, like the absence of it, shrinks from this moral weighing and estimate of ourselves as God sees us; it is in a hurry to get pardon at once, content with that, or with zeal turning preacher, and thus slurring over so essential a work *in* us, because of joy in Christ's work *for* us. But this negligent haste is as unscriptural as it is a wrong to God and a dangerous lack for our souls.

The apostle then, having already preached Jesus and the resurrection in the market-place, speaks on the Areopagus of their life of idolatrous rebellion against the One True God, and presses on their conscience God's present injunction to men, that they all everywhere should repent. He waits on all, and graciously welcomes in Christ's name all who repent and believe the gospel.

O my reader, have you repented? Do you repent now of your thoughtless, guilty, selfish life? You need to repent as truly as the Athenians. The door is open; and Jesus is the door to God and all His grace. The true sense of your badness is morally in you the beginning of goodness. May it be the goodness of God "leading thee to repentance." Repent and believe the gospel. The Father hitherto and the Son work; they had not found as yet an adequate ground for the true and everlasting sabbatism. There was perfection in Jesus; but till He died atoningly, He abode alone. Divine love would have much fruit through His death for and in us who believe.

THE RISEN JUDGE.

"Because he set a day in which he is about to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he appointed, affording proof to all in that he raised him from among the dead." Acts xvii. 31.

HERE the apostle applies the truth to the conscience. He had preached "Jesus and the resurrection" in the market-place; but in this, whether to wit or ignorance or both, he seemed a setter forth of strange divinities. Now on Areopagus he proclaims the risen Jesus, whom God ordained to be the judge of living men on the earth, after having insulted the One living and true, the Creator and sustainer of the universe, by their many gods and many lords, the demons of the Pagan world. But he also points to the new and fatal sin of that generation, which the Gentiles shared with the still more guilty Jews, the crucifixion of His Son and righteous servant Jesus, God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

It was divine love coming down from the height of glory, and deigning, in the person of the Son, to become man in the midst of sinful and wretched men to seek and to save the lost. This they would not have but disdained. When He fed the hungry, cured the sick and raised the dead, cast out evil spirits, rebuked the wind and the waves,

they wondered and admired. Such a man exalted mankind ; but it was another thing to convict them of guilt, warn them of everlasting judgement, and speak of giving His life as a ransom in God's grace toward His enemies, that whosoever believed on Him should not perish but have life eternal. For where man did his worst, there also God did His best ; and human enmity was far exceeded by divine love. The soldier's insolent spear drew forth from the dead Saviour's heart water and blood : the emblems of what purifies the unclean, and what atones for the guilty. Compare John xix. 32—37, and 1 John v. 6—8.

O my reader, is not this what the sinner needs? So I have found by faith : if you have not, lose not a moment and submit to the truth. God in His word presents it to you and any other, as to me and every one who has already believed. The Holy Spirit attests the three witnesses in the gospel to every creature. O the sin of despising such love ! To refuse it is to make your case worse than a pagan's.

The resurrection of the Lord is alike the ground of faith God has given you, and the warning of a day when He will judge the quick. For Him whom man condemned to the cross God raised up again, as He Himself over and over uttered to the dull ears of His disciples. When He hung on the tree God laid the awful burden of sin upon Him, made the sinless One sin for us, that we who believe might become His righteousness in Christ.

It was God's righteousness, not ours, for we were the sinners for whom He became substitute. Thus is God just in justifying the believer, who owns his sins and finds Him not sparing His own Son that we might be washed clean for His presence. Jesus is ready to judge the habitable world which cast Him out. The world and all in it inherit this load of guilt unremoved to this day. The only way to escape judgement is to repent and believe the gospel. This God enjoins on all men everywhere, as we saw. Is not this grace to every creature? But grace rejected seals your guilt. Jesus is coming, first to receive His own for His Father's house; secondly, to judge in righteousness the inhabited earth, not yet the dead but living man everywhere. He, knowing well how incredulous most would be, said, "when the Son of man cometh [*i.e.* for His second and judicial act], shall he find faith on the earth?"

Beware then that you trifle not, lest you prove His words true in your everlasting ruin. He tells you in Luke xvii. how that day is to be. "As it came to pass in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank; they married, they were given in marriage; until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all. And in like manner as it came to pass in the days of Lot. They ate, they drank; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded. But on the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulphur

from heaven, and destroyed all. After the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed."

The judgement of the dead is under wholly different conditions, which it is folly to confound with that of the quick. More like it in a slight degree was the destruction of Jerusalem, and on a far smaller scale. But the words added by our Lord are incompatible with either, and describe what will be when He appears for the judgement of living man. "In that day, he who shall be on the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not go down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember the wife of Lot;" and so to the end of the chapter, I might cite words quite inapplicable to the siege of Titus, still less to the judgement of the dead before the "great White Throne," when the earth and heaven shall have fled before the Judge's face; whereas every word tallies with His coming to judge the living.

Is it not truly ominous—the unbelief of man so nearly concerned, and with issues so incalculable? Jews have no difficulty in looking for a divine judgement on the living, and expect the verification of their national hopes in a destruction to fall on all the nations of the earth when they are gathered to their land for more than pristine glory under David and Solomon. But they are little alive to the clear account of the judgement of the dead. Christendom acknowledges the judgement of the

dead, but puts it off indefinitely and mixes it up with the judgement of the quick ; so that the power of neither tells, as both ought, on the conscience. Nor can there be a plainer proof of this error than its effect in confounding two scriptures so distinct as Matt. xxv. 31—46 and Rev. xx. 12—18 ; for in the first is found not one dead man, in the second not one living. Tradition blurs them into one, and makes both interpretations erroneous. Thereby is lost the profit from each, which rightly understood is very great. A vague muddle takes their place, which is not only inconsistent with what God has revealed, but helps on unbelief in defiance of every word which proceedeth from His mouth.

But the resurrection of Jesus disarms the believer of all fear, whether from the judgement of the living at the beginning of the Kingdom to come, or from the judgement of the dead at its end. The believer will be manifested before His judgement-seat, and will give account of all done in the body ; but as the Lord unmistakably declared, he “cometh not into judgement,” being already justified. Now it is God that justifieth ; and if God be for us, who against ? Till the disciples understood it in the light of scripture, they were filled with perplexity and gloom, as we read in the beginning of Matthew xxviii., Mark xvi., Luke xxiv., and John xx., yet soon dispersed by His blessed light and joy. He that was so dear and well-known stood in the midst on the resurrection day, “and saith to them, Peace to you. And having said

this, he shewed to them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord." Does He change? or the efficacy of His death? or the triumphant peace and joy of His resurrection? He that had the power of death was vanquished, the sins blotted out by His blood, the judgement of God borne on the cross, man in Him entering on a new order of being, fit for the presence and glory of God above, and for the Holy Spirit to indwell here below meanwhile.

Such was the virtue of His death displayed in the power of resurrection, and given as the portion of every Christian thenceforward able to say, His Father and my Father, His God and my God, while looking forward with assurance to a hope as glorious as the faith is certain, both flowing out of God's love from eternity and to eternity, known by His word and enjoyed now in the power of His Spirit. For there is no privilege of Christianity more characteristic than the gift of the indwelling Spirit, as seal of the Christian and earnest of his inheritance of glory. Nor is there any truth more feebly, if at all known, in Christendom; which glories in the first man and his science, not in the Second; as indeed they are, as the scripture shows, incompatible and mutually exclusive.

THE RESULT,—THEN AS NOW.

"And when they heard of resurrection of dead [men], some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again concerning this. Thus Paul went out from their midst. But certain men clave to him; among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman by name Damaris, and others with them." Acts xvii. 32—34.

RESURRECTION once more aroused resistance and derision. Some mocked; and others said, "We will hear thee again concerning this." To hear the apostle again was more than man could insure. Mockers and doubters shall certainly hear the voice of the risen Jesus, when the hour comes for a "resurrection of judgement," which will vindicate the truth to His glory, and prove the worthlessness of the unbeliever, and his deeds evil in God's sight; as those who believe receive life eternal now, walk in obedience, bear good fruit, and rise to a "resurrection of life."

Creation is a standing witness of God to all mankind, did they but stop to consider. It was in its final shape complete before man (the head by God's appointment of all the earthly sphere) was formed, and formed in full vigour of mind and body to look upon it all around him and to hold converse with God without a cloud or suspicion. Creation was a vast miracle; but Adam was not there to see its several parts. He saw the effects in their beauty where all was very good.

Such is the testimony of the Bible as afterwards

written by Moses, admitted to divine intercourse beyond others save the Son of man who could say when on earth that He was in heaven; Man but infinitely more than man, who cites Moses as giving God's truth as far as then revealed. And when we think out what we are told of man and every other on earth created not in embryo but in full growth, we cannot but feel how such an account approves itself to us as befitting both God the Creator and the creature.

The most pronounced Freethinkers, the Positivist Mill, and the Agnostic Spencer, admit that secondary causes fail to explain the universe, and that primeval causes (for they thus own a *causa causans*) must have operated before, behind and above all that men can apprehend. How much more is One who announces His death by lawless hands, and His rising on the third day, with the amplest evidence that so He did rise! Then seen, heard, felt by unimpeachable witnesses, manifestly not a result of natural causes, it is God's action for the worthiest reason and His own glory in the midst of this world's evil and unbelief.

But resurrection is a tremendous shock to the race as reversing all the system of causes and effects with which they are familiar day by day, which they call reflective life. Man is painfully familiar with death and tries to think it natural. But it is not, though appearing so now. God made man with provision to live, if he did not disobey Him. Man disobeyed, and death, as God

warned, entered as a penalty through his transgression. But even then the LORD God appeared, convicted Adam and Eve respectively of their sin, traced it up to the enemy, the old serpent, and in sentencing the deceiver announced the triumph of grace in the woman's Seed, who, in His body however bruised, should crush the enemy for ever.

Thus was the Saviour's death to be turned to endless gain for all who believe, and to the glory of God who gave His Son to be born of woman that it might be so. But His death was followed by His resurrection, as it must be both on His own account as a divine person no less than from the Father's glory, truth, and righteousness, for the peace, joy, and blessing of His own. It is too the witness to His foes that, alive again for evermore, He is coming to judge the habitable earth, where men listened to the old enemy and put Him to death: the awful sin of man, and the wondrous grace of God as the propitiation for our sins. His resurrection and going up into His glory is a pledge that He died a sacrifice for all that believe, and that God has accepted the sacrifice on our behalf, and Him who offered it for His glory.

Christ's resurrection from among the dead is the witness of perfect deliverance from sin and all its consequences, and of entrance on a new life in imperishable blessedness. It is not only that the Heir of all things should be glorified; but He now acts in the power of that grace which will bring all who believe to share His absolutely new order of

things, in our souls now by faith, next in our bodies, and in the inheritance itself, when He comes again in glory.

Some think like certain Athenians after Plato of the soul's immortality, but forget their responsibility for sin, and look not to God to be saved from their sins and His judgement. Man glorifies himself in that; yet the soul's immortality does not save from everlasting ruin, but "Jesus only." And resurrection then becomes our joyful hope founded on His; "Because I live, ye shall live also:" a life now for our souls, at His coming for our bodies; a life of victory over death and judgement, a life of heavenly and everlasting glory.

The hopes of man are through science, politics, education and the like to ameliorate the old and fallen creation. But they might see if not blinded by Satan that evil men and impostors wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. The fashion of this world passeth; yea, the world itself is passing, and its lust; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Resurrection declares the unmistakable power of God in Christ vanquishing Satan. In Him Man has conquered to bring those who believe into His wholly new state according to God's counsels.

Whenever souls fail to apprehend this in the Spirit, they get occupied with man and the world, striving to amend society and improve the general state. Never did Christ any thing of the sort; nor did the apostles and prophets essay such

measures. They taught that man is dead, that life is in Christ, that He only is the all and in all; that He is coming to take His own to the Father's house; and that He and they will shortly after appear in glory to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness, before the judgement of the dead.

But man, as he dreads God out of a bad conscience, either derides openly or politely puts off. Nevertheless God does His gracious work. A man of weight bowed to the truth and the grace he heard, Dionysius the Areopagite, as did a woman named Damaris and others. But the rest abode in their unbelief, and the apostle went forth from their midst with the message of God's good tidings for such as have an ear to hear.

How is it with you, dear reader, as you scan these lines? By man came sin and death; but by man, the Second man, came the resurrection. This points to the Lord as the Deliverer of those who believe on Him, and the Judge of all who are indifferent and turn away from Him. But why should you perish, when He is at hand, the Life and the Saviour for all that call upon Him? Remain as you are, and you are lost for ever. Receive Him, and you are born of God. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them life eternal; and they shall never perish, and none shall seize out of my hand. My Father who hath given [them] to me is greater than all, and none can seize out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father are one."

THE ELDERS IN HEAVEN.

REV. iv. v. 1-10.

THERE is a plain and simple fact which ought to strike any attentive reader of the Revelation:—the churches are no longer in view after chapter iii. as subsisting and the province of the dealings of the Lord here below. I do not say that they have ceased absolutely to exist; but they are not before the Lord as the objects of His care or even chastening. They are nowhere taken account of after the seer's prophetic visions begin. They are alluded to in the concluding observations of the book, chapter xxii., when the whole course of the prophecy is closed, and the Spirit of God is merely giving, as a final exhortation, the use to be made of the book. But the fact that claims our consideration is, that from the beginning of the fourth chapter we have no longer the churches brought before us as subsisting on earth, and under the disciplinary action of the Lord.

For this reason, as well as for many others of a detailed kind which have acted on the minds of children and servants of God from early days, I have no doubt whatever that the seven churches have a mystic as well as a literal aspect. I believe that the Lord Jesus, in

short, chose those seven particular assemblies in the province of Asia, because there were circumstances in them which at that time called for His particular notice. But this is not all. Along with this it was so ordered that His letters to the angels of the churches on their state should be the occasion of giving a prolonged special instruction as long as the church of God was to be the object of His dealing here below. That is, the epistles to the churches had a past historical application in St. John's days; and from that epoch they were intended also to give a kind of prophetic outline of the chief salient points in the course of the church as long as it should be left in this world.

Thus Ephesus shows us the declension from first love which led the Lord to threaten the removal of the candlestick.

In Smyrna we can plainly see persecution from the heathen powers, but along with this the rising up of Judaism formed as a systematic body in the Christian church. It is at this point that we have the "synagogue of Satan"—those who say they are Jews and are not, but a synagogue of Satan. In the days of Paul individuals had been always endeavouring to drag the church of God back into ordinances, or other misuses of the law; but now it was become a compactly framed system—the greatest internal enemy the church of God ever yet had to contend against. Other things there were, some grosser and some subtler. Antichrist, too, had gone out from the family of God; but I am speaking now of that which has often deceived saints. Even as a Barnabas and a Peter (we are informed for our solemn warning) were drawn away at the beginning,

so much more, during the course of the church, godly and orthodox persons have been constantly in danger on this side.

In Pergamos we behold the church where Satan's throne is, not persecuted but exalted, acquiring power and influence under the patronage of the world.

Next we have Thyatira with the portentous figure of Jezebel, that murderous queen and false prophetess, the most relentless slaughterer of the saints of God in all ages. It does not require much of the prophetic ken to understand where the reality that answers to the picture is found. Thus you see it is no longer simply Balaam, or the teaching for hire, but Jezebel, an incomparably more advanced system of evil; and accordingly children born to her. It becomes a perpetuated race of iniquity in that which bears the name of the assembly of God here below.

After this comes Sardis, where there are no longer horrors of the kind that were contemplated under the preceding; yet, while there is profession of the truth, the Lord tells them that their works were not found perfect before His God. Worldliness, accordingly, is the great snare that is found here. It is not simply the patronage of the world, nor is it only, nor so much, the endeavour to govern the world under the name of the church (this was Jezebel); but now they boast of orthodoxy and correct morals, but, nevertheless, are no better than a name to live with death working largely.

Then we find Philadelphia, which I do not doubt has found its counterpart in the amazing liberty that the Lord has given for the spread of the Bible; in the active going forth of the gospel far and wide; in the recall of

Christians, not only to the love of the brotherhood, but to their own proper portion, to which their blessed relationship with the Lord entitles them, and this in the revived prospect of the speedy return of the Lord Jesus.

Lastly there comes Laodicea, a picture of indifference, after truth had been largely propagated and known,—but where conscience altogether fails, where the one thought is the people of God and their rights, but alas! without heart for the glory of God. It is merely man under a new form; not man in the world; but man bearing the name of Christ, obliterating in his self-complacency all just thought and feeling for the glory of Christ;—a state accordingly of great boastfulness and pretension,—a state of satisfaction with the progress that has been made, and the largest expectation of that which is to be done. But the Lord counts it all lukewarmness, that indifference which, in His judgment, is more offensive and contrary to His mind than if one were honestly led away by error or evil for a time. It is a heart for nothing; it is lukewarmness to everything, even to Christ Himself. So it is the condition which is above all things loathsome to the Lord, and which He resents; so that He pronounces not merely the removal of the candlestick, but the spueing it out of His mouth, as most nauseous to Him.

Solemn to say, it is here that the curtain drops upon the churches here below. We hear no more about them, save only that in the conclusion, as already said, there is a call to hear the book in general. But as a history under the mysterious protracted form of the seven golden candlesticks and the Lord's messages to their

angels—a kind of prophetic history of the church as a whole from that epoch till He comes, “the things that are,”—there is nothing more to add.

The scene therein is changed. A door is seen by the prophet opened in heaven, not yet for the Lord Jesus, followed by His saintly hosts, to come out of heaven (which remains for a later date), but for John to go up and see in the Spirit. “After this I looked, and, behold, a door opened in heaven.” It is not for drawing near into the holiest by faith: the Spirit of God never calls this the opening of a door. In Hebrews x. the veil is shown to be rent, and the believer even now by faith draws near through the value of the blood of Christ. But here we have the ordinary figure of that by which one enters in; and accordingly, lest there should be any doubt about the meaning, the first voice which the prophet heard was, as it were, of a trumpet talking with him, and saying, “Come up hither, and I will show thee”—not exactly “things which must be hereafter,” as if it were left vague and distantly future, but “the things which must be *after these*.” Simple as the change just suggested is—and I apprehend there is no question of the correctness of it; I do not think any unbiassed person familiar with the language would doubt it—the importance of it is this, that it binds what is to follow in the book with the termination of the history of the seven churches. If it meant “hereafter” in a loose general way, you might suppose the seven churches terminated a possibly long interval, and then “things which must be hereafter;” but if we have the seven churches or “things that are,” and then “the things which must be *after these*,” there is a close

link formed between the end of the church's state and the prophetic visions following as immediately consequent.

Now this will prove of some importance, though I do not wish to press the thought beyond that which would commend itself to any simple and unprejudiced mind. But what man of reflection can avoid seeing that the very next fact brought before us after Rev. ii. iii. is not churches on earth in any shape, but the prophet entering in by the open door in heaven? The immediate object, of course, was for the vision of that which he had to write yet further, the power of the Holy Ghost giving him to behold what was seen in or from heaven and about to be on earth. And what he sees there first of all was a throne set, and One sitting on the throne. It was the throne of God on high. It is not said to be a golden throne, as in the most holy place, whether of the tabernacle or of the temple. Such was the propitiatory seat of gold where blood was sprinkled as a means for men to draw near through sacrifice, priesthood maintaining consistency with it spite of failure. But this is in no way the object of the throne in Rev. iv. The golden throne, with atoning blood upon and before it, is one of grace; it is the expression of what God can be and is to man, where grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. The throne that was now seen set in heaven was judicial, not the witness of divine grace, though it be always, no doubt, the throne of divine majesty.

"He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone." The jasper, as we know, is used as symbolic of the glory of God in connection with the

heavenly state. In Rev. xxi. it is said, "He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone." I consider therefore that the jasper is used here, and no doubt the sardius also, as symbolic of God's glory, as far as it could be manifested to the creature. There is a glory of God that is entirely above creature contemplation; there is a glory which may become visible to the creature. God has at various times permitted that His glory should shine on men, even on earth; but more so when rapt in the Holy Ghost, into His presence above. At the same time, I say again, it is not, of course, the essential glory of God "to which no man can approach," but as far as God is pleased to make it visible to the creature. It is His glory in government, in the maintenance of good against evil by power.

Round about the throne was seen a rainbow, the sign of God's beneficence to the earth, and at the same time the pledge of a limit put to judgment; but it is not as ordinarily seen among men. (Gen. ix.) It recalled that covenant with the earth; but there is no question of rain here, as even in Ezekiel i. 28. It is simply the divine idea. It is not the circumstances of its use or application, but the grand truth that was represented there—the faithful sign of God's covenant with the creature. Hence it was shown in a form which was particularly refreshing to the eye; it was "in sight like unto an emerald."

"And round about the throne were four and twenty

—not merely seats, but—“thrones.” Every throne is a seat, but every seat is not a throne. These were not bare seats, but thrones for those on whom royalty was conferred. It was, no doubt, a heavenly kind of royalty; but still the thrones were for certain to fill.

This is a remarkable feature. We never hear of angels seated on thrones. Angels never govern; they were made not to reign but to be servants. They never rise above the character of service. Man was made to rule, though, of course, in subjection to God. Even the first man was made to govern. When God made him He said, “Let them have dominion.” It was not merely to do His will. As servants, all are necessarily bound to do the will of God; and all the blessedness of dominion, as of everything else also, depends on its being the will of God. No man governs aright that will not serve. No man will reign righteously that has not a just view of what obedience is to one that is above him. How can he possibly impress the necessity of subjection upon those that are below him? But then, when God made the first man, he was not looking merely at Adam, or the race: the Second Man, the last Adam, was before His mind. Other mén were not worth counting. One man, the first man, was enough to comprehend all the Adam race. That one brought, oh! what ruin upon all that followed him. And God passes quickly from the ruin, and hastens to the day when the Second Man appears, the Lord from heaven; and that man is the last Adam. There is no improvement upon Him; there is no progress after Him. The Second Man is the last Adam; and He is the one that is to govern—the destined Ruler of all

God alone excepted. For you must remember we speak here of His reign as man; and a wonderful thought it is, that every creature of God will be put under the God-exalted man—the man that never exalted Himself, the man who first showed His special and wondrous glory, not by the great deeds He did, but in obedience. Others might do exploits. His servants were to do greater works than He did. But there was one thing in which no servant approached Him—the last thing that you might expect in a divine person; but in a divine person who was a man obedience was the moral perfection of the place He took. Such is the one for whom the kingdom is reserved. He justly takes the throne. He is set, according to God's glory, over all the works of His hands; not, I repeat, simply as God, though He was God from all eternity, and never could cease to be. But He acquired, as man, universal dominion; and He acquired it, not simply by doing the will of God: had He taken it on the ground of what He did, He had taken it alone. He alone deserved it—but He took it, as we shall find, on a far deeper and infinitely more blessed ground—the ground of redemption; and thus others are associated with Him. For that redemption was not for Himself, but for us; and it is on this footing alone that He could have the children of God associated with Him, by redemption, in that glorious kingdom for which He waits, and for which we ought to be waiting.

Here, accordingly, we find round the throne of God twenty-four thrones. What is the allusion in the number "twenty-four"? Numbers in scripture are never without meaning. Do not listen to the men that tell you

it merely means a greater or a smaller number, that it is merely a sort of poetic figure. Why even you do not use language so capriciously as that! When you say twenty-four, you do not mean a mere random number, though you are certainly far from the deep wisdom of God in its symbolic use. But if you are a sensible man, you have some sensible idea. Certainly God will never be below man in the expression of His mind. Now, "twenty-four" is used in scripture; and, as far as I know, the only point with which we can compare our number was when the king divided the priests into so many courses, of which courses there were chief priests. I do not merely mean the high priest: there was but one in such a position. As there was only one among the earthly people, so there is only one for the heavenly. But here we are speaking of the creature, and it is notorious that there were chiefs of each course of priesthood; and as there were twenty-four courses of priests, so also with the singers. It was connected therefore, you will observe, with the ordering and arranging of the priestly service of God. Now this, I have no doubt, is the allusion here.

These twenty-four thrones were not empty. "Upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting." What is the idea conveyed by the term, "elders"? Clearly the possession of wisdom—in this case, of course, heavenly wisdom. The elders were seen round God's throne, sitting on thrones, "clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." This is another point which separates them, but at the same time assuredly confirms what has been already remarked of their separation from angels—from the

highest beings of a spiritual sort suited to heaven—the only inhabitants indigenous to heaven, if one may so say.

The elders had never been seen there before. Visions of heaven have past before us in the Old Testament: why were no elders seen then? Why was there no such group of surrounding thrones? The apostle Paul was caught up to heaven, but not a word about elders in heaven then: why *now*? Surely there were the spirits of the blest in heaven; but spirits are never said to be enthroned; spirits are nowhere in Scripture described as glorified. They are with Christ; they are in paradise; but they are never spoken of as already crowned. The crown is always represented as a future glory. Why so? Because God does not mean to bring any of His people into the full result of heavenly blessedness until He brings them all in. The same moment is destined for the heavenly gathering together of all saints changed into the likeness of Christ. It matters not at what time they lived or died, or if they survived till He comes. I speak, of course, now, of heavenly saints—of those that are to be above. I do not at all exclude the fact that God afterwards begins to form a people upon earth; but I say that those who are destined for the same common heavenly blessedness are caught up together, and that the point of time when they are caught up—the turning-point on which their translation to heaven depends—is the presence of the Lord Jesus for them.

Proofs abound. “We beseech you, brethren, by the presence (or coming) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him.” Any scholar knows that

the presence of our Lord Jesus, and the gathering together of the saints to Him, are here represented in a remarkable manner as one combined idea. There is only one article, which therefore acts as a kind of bracket, and binds together the two thoughts. That is to say, the gathering of the saints is not before the presence of the Lord, nor is it left for a separate act after He comes to meet them. The force is, that the presence of the Lord at once gathers all the saints: whether the dead, by raising them; or the living, by changing them into His glorious likeness.

The result is apparent now. Here they are seen on high. Here they are found in the presence of God in heaven; and they are there enthroned, and crowned with "crowns of gold." They had practically manifested righteousness; but divine righteousness alone had brought them there and thus dealt with them. It is not that they lacked the witness of righteousness in their ways and daily conversation on earth, or that they were without the answer to it now in heaven; for they are seen also to be clothed in white raiment—a full acknowledgment of saintly righteousness, as the gold is of God's righteousness. The moment you get righteousnesses, you get differences among the children of God. It is known afterwards, from Rev. xix., where the white linen is explained to be the righteousnesses of saints. That is, each has a righteousness which divine grace has produced in them and by them, and this is recognised above. It is a falsehood that God does not own that which His Spirit has produced here; but it is a still more dishonouring and destructive falsehood to suppose that the righteousness of the

saints could bring any to God. The only righteousness that could fit a sinner before Him in heaven is the righteousness of God, founded on the Lord Jesus and His infinite redemption. But then, although grace works through righteousness in the redemption that is by Christ Jesus, full room is left for whatever the Spirit of God may have wrought in and by the children of God. Thus all truth is kept unimpaired. The people that deny the righteousness of the saints are wrong; and the people that deny the righteousness of God are still more fatally wrong. The fact is, that you will find in this, as in all other controversies about scripture, that there is a great deal of truth apt to be sometimes forgotten on both sides. I am alluding, not to anything particular of late years, but to the invariable course of controversies—no matter what the occasion may have been—in Christendom.

In this case then the twenty-four elders on thrones are for the first time seen in the presence of God. Scripture emphatically marks this. Indeed it is clearly the grand distinctive feature that caught the eye of the prophet, next to the throne of God Himself. There were thrones—associated and subordinate—no doubt; but still there were thrones around the great central throne of God; and those seated on them embrace in the most distinct manner the heads of the heavenly priesthood. I say the *heads* for this reason; that after these saints are shown us as elders crowned and enthroned in heaven, we find the clearest reference to others that were about to be kings and priests. That is, we find certain persons who suffer and are glorified after this. The very last words that I read to-day show another body of saints.

It is said there, "Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed [us] to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made them unto our God kings and priests; and they shall reign," &c. This is the critical reading. I have bracketed a disputed word, and changed where there is no doubt. And where, let me ask, is the reverence of cleaving to a reading that is undoubtedly an innovation? I hold, with due consideration of the context, to more ancient authorities. Who will deny that the nearer you get to the source, the better the reading as a rule? Of old as now many mistakes were made in copying. The scribes that followed the apostles were not inspired any more than printers or editors in modern times. We have therefore to examine everything; and the only sound principle in these matters is to look at all the evidence, and thence to form the result.

Now, I am of opinion that both external and internal evidence would lead a competent judge to the conclusion that the word "*us*" should be absent from the ninth verse. It would seem probable that copyists inserted ἡμᾶς ("us") there—not that this is at all necessary or peculiar to any views I hold.* The most competent en-

* Some years since Professor Tischendorf reported to me, among other Apocalyptic readings, that the Sinai MS. omitted the pronoun ἡμᾶς in Rev. v. 9. This I printed on his authority, which was followed by Dean Alford and others. But when the great uncial was published, I immediately perceived either that the printed text was here wrong, or that the discoverer had led me into an error, awkward to many more though to none so painfully as to me. But he had the candour immediately to re-examine the MS. on my appeal to him, and to confess frankly that he had misled me. Very different was the feeling of a scholar in this country from whom better things might have been

quirers who have no settled interpretation of the book or schemes opposed to mine, agree in omitting it. Thus the most famous editor of the day holds it—the Lutheran Tischendorf. Another excellent scholar, who was when living rather more of a rationalist, holds the same thing—I allude to Lachmann. Again, Dean Alford, of this country, and many more, accept the same reading, agreeing as far as this is concerned. I refer to these various well-known names openly, that none may allow the groundless thought that there is anything peculiar or individual in this judgment. These matters are the common heritage of the church of God; they rest on facts that cannot be gainsaid by anybody except the ignorant.

There is another point far clearer, and, it may be boldly said, indisputable. Any one who knows any-expected. *He* had the temerity not alone to charge me with the fault but to mix up with it the doctrine of the rapture of the church, as if this had influenced the erroneous report. The truth is, that the weighty evidence lies in the fact that, according to the best authorities, followed even by my censor himself, it should be “them” and “they” *in verse 10* (as required by the true Greek text). The elders and living creatures are praising the Lamb in that verse *for others* made kings and priests, not for themselves. This is incontestible. The point debated is whether *ἡμᾶς* should or should not be read in the preceding. Even if it ought certainly to be read, it would rather strengthen the distinction between the saints represented by the elders and living creatures. But I was willing to waive what would rather fortify my position, as honestly believing with the best critics that it is a most suspicious reading, if not certainly on external evidence an intruder. And I was convinced, as I am still, that its insertion presents a sense (when the two verses are taken together) so strange that nobody has yet offered a tolerable explanation. It is therefore still more objectionable on internal grounds. But the question is really independent of doctrine, and is much more one of critical acumen and of spiritual judgment.

thing about the sacred text must be aware that in verse 10 "them" and "they" should take the place of "us" and "we." I do not deny that this is a considerable change of sense; but the evidence is so overwhelming that no one who respects the witnesses God's providence has preserved can hesitate. The sense resulting is excellent, save in the retaining of "us" in the verse before, which would present a harsh and unprecedented change of persons, which nobody, as far as I know, pretends to understand or account for. Here, therefore, one ought to speak with still greater assurance than as to verse 9; though I believe that the change required in verse 10 makes verse 9 uncorrected to be hardly intelligible, and adds much internal force to the few witnesses for its correction. The tenth verse would run thus: "And made them to our God kings and priests: and they shall reign over the earth." A distinct party is in question from those who are singing. The elders, and I suppose also the living creatures, are singing of others. They celebrate the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain and brought to God by His blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, &c. Whether the word "us" should or should not be in verse 9 is not the point on which we are now reasoning. Certainly there is no room for doubt as to the tenth verse:—"and made *them*," not "*us*"—unquestionably not "*us*." The Lamb "made them [that is, some others previously described or at least alluded to] unto our God kings and priests: and they shall reign over the earth."

The importance of this, the true text, is very great, because it shows that besides the twenty-four elders who have this glorious and heavenly place as chiefs

of heavenly priesthood, there are others bought by His blood who, although not in the place of such exalted dignity, either now or at any later time put among the twenty-four elders, are celebrated as made kings and priests, and shall reign over the earth. Thus they are not only to be spared during the judgments that follow, but they are even to share as royal priests in the great millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Nothing can be simpler and surer than this, which is conclusively established by Rev. xx. 4, where the sitters on the thrones are the first class, corresponding to the elders (*i. e.* the Bride, and those called to the marriage supper); then the early sufferers during the seals (after the elders were seen in heaven); and, thirdly, the latest sufferers under the beast in the last efforts of the Antichrist. All share the millennial reign with Christ. The assumption, therefore, that the only persons who will be found in heaven and reign with Christ are these chiefs of heavenly priesthood, is an evident mistake. Saints in a somewhat different position otherwise are to reign with Christ as well as the elders. The twenty-four, when they are seen in heaven, sing of the grace that the Lord was showing, not to themselves, but to others, and this not merely in making them blessed under His reign on the earth, but with Him and them to reign over it.

By the way it may be just observed that the rendering to "reign *on* the earth" is also erroneous. When the verb "to reign" is put along with the preposition *ἐν*, it invariably means the *sphere* of the reigning and not the place where those who reign dwell. There is another word (*ἐν*) that is used invariably for the latter idea.

Scripture is really the most exact book in the world, it matters not what author you select for a comparison with it. If you take the finest effort of Attic Greek, it will be found that there is an accuracy about Biblical language, when people once get into its spirit and understand it, which is beyond Plato, Sophocles, Thucydides, Demosthenes, or any other master of that refined and versatile tongue. Do you allege the solecisms of New Testament Greek? They are far less numerous than pettifogging, combined with ignorance of the truth, used to affirm. But let me tell you that even those authors are not free from words, turns of phrase, and constructions which offend against rule, not only bold rhetorical terms, but structures of sentence that will not bear strict analysis. For instance, it is a fact, although it may seem somewhat odd to many, that the most celebrated of the classics not infrequently make bad grammar in the best of their few extant compositions. It is not insinuated that they did not know it was unusual; they wrote as they did because it added energy to the style. It is only dull men who occupy themselves in fiddling about grammar, and think that there must be always an adherence to technical rules of common language and every-day speech; but the best writers defy such conventionalities whenever it is necessary to give emphasis to what they wish to communicate.

It is not otherwise in the word of God. There is no doubt in scripture, as elsewhere, an occasional departure from the strict rules of ordinary syntax. Let nobody by this suppose my meaning is that it is of no importance to know how to use human speech—our own as

well as the language that God used especially, or any other tongue we may be acquainted with. But it needs to be borne in mind, at the same time, that there is for the Spirit an energy of truth, as well as rhetorical skill among men, which does not hesitate to set at nought a mere grammatical point for some higher end. This falls in with what is claimed for the word of God—the most perfect form of revealing to men that which God would convey to him. Hence it is, that what some are quick to count blots or blemishes of style are all sanctioned and intended by God's Spirit; and that what sounds at first abrupt, harsh, or strange, spite of that peculiarity whatever it may be, conveys the idea more justly than anything else could. Yet, claiming all this for the word of God and for every line of it, we must not go beyond our text, but hold that the writers only used what can be proved by the best evidence of every kind, external as well as internal, to be the very words of the Holy Ghost.

In this case, then, we have the four and twenty elders round the throne, and besides, as already said, the intimation in the next chapter that others from all quarters are not only to be saved but to reign with Christ over the earth as well as themselves. This is of the highest interest. It shows us plainly that we must not adhere to those systems of doctrine that never can bear an infringement of a view that is held popularly. For instance, perhaps we have all been brought up in the notion that all the children of God, in all ages, compose the church of God. Now it will be found on closer research that this is not supported by the word of God.

While fully granting the pre-eminent place in glory to the church, scripture shows there are others to be blessed in heaven as well as on earth who are not included in that particular company. And this is proved, not only by the prophetic word, such as this, but by the plainest doctrinal teaching of God. Take for instance Heb. xii., or again chapter xi. In the end of the latter chapter we are told that God had "provided some better thing for us, that they [the Old Testament saints] without us should not be made perfect." Here you have clearly a distinction between *them* and *us*, as those who sing differ from those sung of in Rev. v. The nature of that distinction is another matter. We may be more or less exact in our appreciation of the difference, but differences there are, past, present, and future, expressly laid down by the word of God. Take again the next chapter, where it is said that we "are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;" and more than this, "an innumerable company of angels;" then "God the judge of all;" then the church of the firstborn." It is impossible fairly to overlook a distinction here drawn (to speak of no more) between "the spirits of the just made perfect" and "the church of the firstborn." You have clearly the assembly of the heirs or firstborn—who are viewed elsewhere as the one body; and you have the spirits of just men made perfect—another company quite distinct. This is enough to show that the word of God does distinguish where a great many excellent people confuse.

I do not pretend to go into all at once, but I am bound to produce from elsewhere support and illustration of that which is before me in the chapters we are now

considering. Let it suffice to say then that the twenty-four elders are beyond doubt in a singular and conspicuous place of blessedness—saints glorified in the presence of God. Yet it is clear that, when there, they anticipate others who are to reign with Christ as well as they. These others are so much the more important, because the great object of the book of the Apocalypse is to show us the destiny, and the circumstances through which they pass in order to arrive at that destiny, of these other saints.

Let us, however, go on with our chapter. "Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices." To this I call your particular attention. Is this the aspect of God's throne as now revealed and known? Do thunderings and lightnings and voices proceed from the throne of God at this present time? And is this the way in which the throne of God—the action of His throne—is or would be qualified? Certainly not. The throne of God now is a throne of grace, to which we come boldly. (Heb. iv.) Impossible for man here below to come boldly to a throne out of which proceed thunderings and lightnings and voices. This would indeed be presumption; for we must then defy, as it were, that which the throne itself manifests and proclaims. Clearly the thunderings and lightnings and voices are the expression of God's displeasure and judicial feeling, so to speak, towards things and people upon the earth.

Is it demanded, then, how the elders come to be seen around such a throne? For this simple reason—they are in the resurrection state; they are in heaven glorified. How did they get there? They were

gathered to the presence of the Lord who entitled them to stand there. How is it, then—and this is a very fair question—that the presence of the Lord which is to gather His heavenly ones to Himself is not here described? My answer is, as it is set forth nowhere in the Revelation (if so, where?), the objection is entirely invalid. It is not the fact that it can be shown to be described elsewhere. In short, you must insert it in some place where it is rather implied than described. The only question is, where is the best place to suppose it? I answer, here assuredly, and nowhere else; and here for this reason—that you have the chiefs of the whole body, and remember, not twelve, not twenty, not twenty-one, but twenty-four. They are the heads of the entire priesthood—the whole of the glorified or heavenly priesthood viewed in its chiefs; and in its chiefs, because there are others to be priests afterwards. Therefore you could not have more than the chiefs seen here. If they are gathered to be with the Lord in heaven, not in spirit, but in body also—glorified there if they are crowned and enthroned there, all this cannot be without the Lord having come and gathered them unto Himself. If so—how? How possibly conceive such a thing as the full number? Bear in mind that there is no addition to those thrones afterwards, not even one more; never but twenty-four thrones—never more or less than twenty-four elders. If it were merely the estate of separate spirits, there would be afterwards an addition. Room must be left for more at a later epoch. But no; the same unvarying body is found until a certain defined moment, when this symbol of elders disappears and gives way to another—when the time is

come for what is called the bridal or the marriage supper of the Lamb.

At that time of joy it is no question of elders: the Lamb does not marry people as elders, but as the bride. It is the very same body, but viewed no longer as invested with the wisdom that God conferred through our Lord Jesus; no longer viewed, in short, as elders, but as one corporate company, the bride. This is in relation to the marriage just then celebrated, which is the consummation of the hopes of the church. It is the full expression of our communion with Christ.

Then, again, when the Lord Jesus is about to execute judgment on the beast, and the false prophet, and the armies of the earth, He takes the place of a warrior, and so do they. They are at that point seen not as elders, of course, nor even as the bride; for what business has either in battle? They are seen in what is far more admirably suited to the case: they come out of heaven as the hosts on white horses, like the great Leader they follow.

Thus, it is readily seen, we have very clearly symbolic language used with the greatest possible precision in the Revelation. Of course I admit there are difficulties in this book, as there are in every other; but the man who talks about the difficulties of the Revelation I should like to see taking up Genesis. Very likely he imagines he understands the first book of Moses well; but it can easily be proved that understanding one part of the word of God generally goes with understanding another, and the people that do not profess to understand the end of the Bible, you may depend upon it, do not know much better about the beginning:

at least, such has been my experience in these matters. The word of God gives us the truth; and one part of revelation makes way for another. It is a living organism. It is not a mere science that you may master up to a certain point, and not understand the rest; it is a thing of life and power. These words are spirit and life, as given by the Spirit of God; and although undoubtedly there may occasionally be one that has been blessed in directing his attention to a particular part, it is the exception rather than the rule. In general, the man that understands the Bible best is the man that reads it *all*, valuing it as given of God to be understood by the Holy Ghost; consequently, he does not pretend to have fathomed or exhausted any part, but he, by grace, understands a little here and a little there, and so on, right through the whole Bible. This is generally true of Christians who have faith in the word and Spirit of God; and I believe it the safest and wisest way. It is a dangerous thing to have your hobbies in scripture—your favourite subjects, which exclusively occupy your mind. Those who so read get exaggerated, unhealthy notions by that means. I would urge my brethren to seek earnestly a real and large entrance into the mind of God. In order that it should be deep, be assured that this depends to an immense extent on the measure in which self is judged, and the Lord is looked to; for you cannot separate intelligence in the things of God from spiritual state. It is not genuine, wholesome, or savoury, without moral power; and it is a great mercy that so it is.

As far as concerns the subject before us, the general result seems to me to be sufficiently plain—plain

enough to the simple ; and the main point is to become simple, in order that we may really enter into the revealed mind of God.

Returning to our chapter, we may remark that beside the issuing from the throne of lightnings and thunders and voices, we find "seven lamps [or torches] of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." It means the Spirit of God. He is not now described as baptizing into one body. Such is the way in which God acts in the church. But here it is in the retributive dealings of God. It is that Spirit which perfectly discerns, detects, and judges—seven torches therefore—that which does not fail to make manifest morally before itself. God will act to this end when His throne assumes a judicial character. The evidence is abundant that it is a different state of things from what exists now. This confirms therefore what has been said before. The churches are done with. There is no such thing as the Lord dealing with Christian assemblies on earth. He is no longer in that form of relationship when the fourth chapter begins to apply.

But, further, "before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal." Now, in the temple there was a sea, no doubt, but it was a sea of water, not of glass (as in the tabernacle there had been a laver). Here then we have a sea, but it is a sea of *glass*. Why so ? As long as there was one member of the body of Christ who required to be cleansed in passing through this defiled and defiling earth, so long the figure of the application of the water by the word is necessary. Why is it here a sea "of glass" ? Because it is no longer a question of

the word used to cleanse the defiled. Their course was over. They had passed out of the scene of defilement. Those who are here viewed in the presence of God are no longer subjects of defilement. As long as they were in the world, of course they needed to have their feet washed. He who says that, because one is washed in the blood of Christ, he does not require to confess his sins day by day, understands no more than half his Saviour, and evidently sets one part of God's mercy and blessing against another. It would be most miserable, if it were otherwise possible, with new and eternal life, to be left under the consequences of daily defilement. It is granted that if all you care for is just that your sins should be forgiven, you may have a scanty sense of God's holiness, or of what becomes His child ; but if you feel the value of communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, if you prize the blessedness of sharing the Lord's thoughts and feelings, you cannot but be sensitive to such defilement which grieves the Holy Ghost whereby you are sealed till the day of redemption. This is precisely why God works in you by His Spirit. He sees and feels what is wrong ; He acts according to God's nature as displayed in Christ, and brings you to feel evil and to confess it before Him. Such is the effect of Christ's priesthood. We require not only a Saviour to die for our sins, but a priest to live for us, and to intercede for us though we are Christians, because we are still on earth in weakness, need, and alas ! too often failure. Accordingly, it is not denying His sacrifice that will mend matters, nor will nullifying His priesthood establish souls, but simply dry them up into mummies.

The blood of Christ remains the one sacrifice ; and it is of the very essence of the truth of Christianity that there is but one sacrifice, and that Christ's sacrifice has done this work perfectly and for ever for the believer. But then, instead of a man merely looking back at the sacrifice of Christ, when he falls into a sin, he has, while holding this fast, to humble himself before God ; for the Holy Ghost uses the word of God to deal with him founded on the sacrifice of Christ, but never renewing it. The sacrifice of Christ abides in its efficacy ; but, so far from this being all we want, because of it there is a necessity for "the washing of water by the word." "He that is washed [bathed] needeth not save to wash his feet." For this is he that "came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood." The Lord Jesus has provided for all. Out of His side, as we know, flowed both ; and so it is, that as the blood of Christ expiated our sin as guilty sinners before God, so the water not only gives us new birth, but also, in answer to His own intercession, carries on the cleansing of the feet when they are defiled in our own passage through the world.

This is no longer the case with those connected with the sea of glass ; that is, it is no longer the want when saints are glorified ; and so this vision intimates. Not, of course, that the Lord will neglect any of His people who may afterwards be called. The vision to which we are here introduced simply gives us a complete picture of the change that will have taken place when it is fulfilled ; and one of the new elements we see is that, instead of a laver of water to wash the feet of those exposed to the soils of earth, the saints are now seen

in glory—elders in His presence, assessors on thrones round God's throne. The whole work was done, not of atonement only but intercession also, as far as they were concerned. As they had thus passed out of the sphere where they needed the cleansing operation of the Spirit, the symbolic sea in this vision consists not of water but glass. It is fixed, not active, purity. It is the witness therefore that no defilement remains. As they had passed out of earth, and sit enthroned in the presence of God in heaven, we can readily understand that it could not be otherwise.

There is a subsequent vision, affording an interesting point of contact, or rather contrast, that may be called to your attention. As is easy to be seen, there are others who are called by God's grace after these; but they go through a storm of suffering, they go through a sea of awful temptation, tribulation, and everything else that can harass mind and body. And this will fall, I have no doubt whatever, as a scourge on the guilty world—God's retributive dealing, because of the despising of the gospel, as well as the unfelt unjudged rejection up to death of His own Son. You know that Jews and Gentiles both put to death the Son of God. Certainly the disciples did not. Afterwards they acquired a heavenly character, and, by Paul's ministry, pass out of the earthly scene. Christians as such were not guilty of Christ's death. Whatever was their guilt, it was atoned for by that precious blood; but they were not called as yet, and so not guilty of the dreadful deed. Jews and Gentiles were.

Accordingly, it needs no great intelligence to see thoroughly the moral reasons why the church, being

called out after the cross, should be now taken out of the scene, and why the Lord begins to work on Jews and Gentiles. They go through this retributive chastening; they are the direct proper objects of this special tribulation; and when at the close some of them are seen as conquerors—for the Lord will surely work by grace in a certain number—when those who had won the victory over the beast, &c., are seen in Revelation xv., they are found on “a sea of glass, mingled with fire.” There is no mingling with fire in chap. iv. The fire is the heat of tribulation; and when the saints that pass through the tribulation—those that died, and were brought by grace into heavenly glory—when they are seen at a subsequent epoch, they have on them the marks of having crossed that sea, the tribulation through which they passed. It is not so with the elders. The reason is, that the tribulation was not even heard of yet. The tribulation, the great tribulation, was long after they were gone to heaven.

On the whole, therefore, the general bearing of the chapter is not so obscure as to hinder the simplest mind in Christendom that is subject to God through the teaching of the Spirit from understanding it.

“Before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four” (not “beasts,” as is well known, but) “living creatures.” These living creatures show us the various qualities of God’s power; they represent it in a symbolic form. The heathen, as we know, who did not know God, exalted the attributes of God into idols which they worshipped. Here we know not merely the living creatures that are round about the

throne, but Him that sat upon it; we know the one and only true God the Father, and we know Him by the Lord Jesus whom He has sent. But God does in this symbolic way teach the characters of His power in which His judgments are going to be executed.

First, we may observe the four living creatures were full of eyes before and behind. It is remarkable that, although we have the cherubim described in the Old Testament, they are not so spoken of there. They are here described as having not only eyes, but eyes within, as stated in verse 8. This is peculiar. They may have eyes, but "eyes within" seems to show an intrinsic power of discernment that is characteristic of the New Testament. Thus all the description here, while it resembles the Old Testament, gives us progress and so far difference. In short, the living creatures are somewhat like the cherubim, and in other respects like the seraphs of Isaiah vi. Besides, they have their own peculiarities, resembling the cherubs of Ezekiel. The first is like a lion, the second like a steer or young bull, the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle. That is, you have power in its majesty, power in its patient labour and endurance, intelligent thought in that which was like a man, and rapidity of execution shown forth in the flying eagle. Again, these four living creatures had each of them six wings about him, just as the seraphs had in Isaiah; and they had not the wheels, a point that distinguishes them from the vision of Ezekiel. "And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

It is worth while to pause a moment and look at the great moral principles of what we have here. There are two relative qualities in reference to which may be traced a remarkable difference in the elders—I mean righteousness and holiness.

Now what is the effect of the direct presence of God on the saints themselves displayed in righteousness before Him? Our chapter iv. shows more than this, the exercise of His throne being judicial dealing with the earth. There are lightnings and thunderings and voices. But the remarkable feature disclosed is, that whilst the elders are enthroned before God thus revealed in righteousness, they sit peacefully in His presence. There is not the very smallest symptom of alarm. There is not even a movement discernible, so truly are they made God's righteousness in Christ.

On the other hand, when God in His holiness is celebrated by the four living creatures according to His own nature—when they praise Him as the "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," the elders are at once in movement. Thus before judicial dealings the elders show us the most perfect rest in the presence of God. As a question of judgment there is not one demand of righteousness that was not satisfied by the cross. If there had been any sin unremoved, oh, what trouble had been among all the twenty-four! But no; they sit in perfect peace on their thrones. But when His holiness is in question, they fall down before Him; they do homage to Him that lives to the ages of ages; they cast their crowns before the throne. Their hearts are swallowed up in the delight of what God is. What He is in His holiness draws them out. It is the attractive

power of His holiness, not the (to others) alarming power of the righteous judgments of God, which kindles their spirits and engages them in adoration. In the presence of righteousness there is nothing but rest; in the presence of the celebration of His holiness there is activity of worship.

Such is, then, the scene that is presented in chap. iv. I shall say a very few words on chapter v. before I close.

Hitherto we have simply had the Lord God Almighty—Jehovah Elohim—that was, and is, and is to come; God, as He had made Himself manifest in His dealings with men here below, especially with the fathers and Israel, but now seen on the throne. And why so? How comes it that He is not here presented as the Father? You know very well how constant in the New Testament “the Father” is. It is notorious that we never hear such a thing as grace and peace from the Lord God Almighty—from Jehovah Elohim, or any other Old Testament designation. And when the apostle Paul employs this his customary formula, never does he couple it with Shaddai, Jehovah, or Elohim. The same is true of the apostles John and Peter and Jude. Nor does even James, though Israel is addressed, and there are texts throughout relative to Jehovah; but never does he give a salutation from Jehovah as such. Why is the old style and title found here? Because a change of great moment is come in; because God is no longer revealing Himself in the formation of the heavenly family. He has taken them out of the scene, which can only be by the coming of the Lord Jesus personally to receive them. (John xiv.; 1 Thess. iv.;

2 Thess. ii. 1.) But this is not brought out in the book of Revelation; it does not fall within its revealed object; because the aim of the prophecy is to set forth the judgments of God, and not the secrets of His grace. Consequently, as the coming of Christ for His own is an event that does not at all directly affect the world, but is intensely a matter for Christ and the church, there is a veil naturally and fittingly drawn over it here. "Behold," says the apostle Paul (1 Cor. xv.), "I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment," &c. This mystery will have taken place when Christ comes to meet us in the air; but the object of the Revelation is not to reveal the mystery of God's taking us on high, but rather of His not judging evil on the earth. Besides, it had been revealed fully already, and therefore was uncalled for. It was the appropriate object and function of the apostle Paul to show what was secret and heavenly to the church blessed with Christ in the heavenlies; but the object of John the seer is, above all, to show what would take place on earth after the church disappears from the scene.

Consequently, all this double scene of worship on high is only preliminary to the great body of the prophetic visions. The object of the book is to unveil the series of judgments that are to fall on the earth, not the gathering of the saints to Christ in heaven. At the same time, you have the fullest confirmation of the doctrines of St. Paul, because, before the blows of divine displeasure fall, the prophet is taken up; he beholds and records the heavenly saints as already gathered in a glorified state. He notifies to us thrones

that never were seen in heaven before, filled already with men risen or changed. In chap. v. the elders and living creatures join in worship, and sing, "Thou hast redeemed [us ?] to God by thy blood." Supposing we do not accept the reading ἡμᾶς or "us" (which I am quite willing, with Lachmann, Tischendorf, and others, to allow may not be genuine), still they are clearly saints who thus address the Lamb. The position of the elders on thrones, their clothing, their functions with the bowls full of odours, &c., prove their redemption, even if they only sung of others expressly, or of the abstract truth. There could be no such ornament as the crown of gold, no such place of dignity for the creature as a throne in God's presence, without being bought by the Lamb's blood. No created being whatsoever could have such a royal and priestly rank on high, except in virtue of such a purchase.

It is to be remarked that here (chap. v.) we have some advance. A seven-sealed book appears in the hand of God. The praises of the last chapter did not go beyond creation and providence; but this in no way exhausted what God had to make known to His own. He was about to reveal quite a new thing—the special process by which He will put the Lord Jesus in possession of the inheritance of creation. Such is the object of the book here seen in the vision—the different forms of judgment that the Lord will apply, eventually issuing in the taking of the kingdom by the Lord Jesus, and His heavenly ones reigning along with Him. "I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the backside:" that is, it was full to overflowing. It was not written as an ordinary scroll, within

only. There was so much to say, that it was written on the back. So in Ezekiel ii. 9, 10 the Jewish prophet had a roll of a book shown; "and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without." It was "sealed with seven seals"—shut up impenetrably, therefore, as far as the creature was concerned. "And I saw an angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"

No one was found, no one able, it is said,—to open the book; and none able, because not one was worthy. But if John weeps much because none was found worthy, one of the elders—for they enter into the mind of Christ—consoles the prophet, saying, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed (or conquered) to open the book." And Jesus opens the book, not simply as a divine person; not simply as the perfectly obedient man; but by overcoming—by the all-prevailing efficacy of His precious blood. He was worthy and able. But He took it on the ground of the price He paid, and not on personal worth or strength. Had He done it out of personal title alone, where were we? He did it on the ground of the price He paid—all our boast and joy, except, indeed, that the best of all that His purchase brings is to delight our souls in Him who thus bought us—not merely in the blessings He has bounteously given us.

Jesus, then, is conqueror; but when He comes forward, it is not as a lion, but as a Lamb. He is proclaimed as a Lion, but when beheld, it is a Lamb as it had been slain. The One who asserts this mighty and majestic

power of God, and especially in connection with the hopes of Israel—that Blessed One—is seen to be the earth-rejected man, the holy sufferer whom the world would not have or suffer to live. Was it worthy of Him? It rejected Him, but rejected Him into the home and glory of God, where He is now seen as the Lamb. And mark, it is not as He descended: He came down the only begotten Son—I do not say leaving His Father's bosom. Oh, no! He never left it: how could He leave it? He was a divine person, and, therefore, even if looked at as a man, it could be said, "the Son of man which is *in heaven*"—not merely, who was, or, who was to be, but "who *is in heaven*." None but He could say this, and, therefore, however much you hold fast—(and you cannot too tenaciously hold fast—the reality of His manhood; and whoever does not hold it fast, is no Christian at all)—let it never disparage His deity; I do not say merely His *divinity*. We talk about the *divinity* of this book, the Bible, but not so rightly of the divinity of Christ as of His "*deity*" or Godhead.

Here then He is spoken of as the Lamb, in particular as the slain Lamb contrasted with the world-powers or ravaging beasts of prey, and especially the one yet to rise and trample down for the last time the people of God on the earth. The Lamb sits there, but rises and takes the book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, and then all heaven is filled with the praise of the Lamb as well as of God.*

If He took that book, it was not merely to read it

* It is well to note that Rev. v. 14 ends, according to the best authority, with "worshipped." "Him that liveth for ever and ever" is a spurious addition. In fact, the elders worshipped *both*.

Himself; it was in love to make all plain for us. What could make it plainer to Him? He opens the seals, and tells us the contents. He unfolds the mind of God. Oh, may we heed it!

This sketch necessarily could not be very complete; but in it I have designedly passed over nothing of importance, as it has occurred to me in glancing over the portion of the word of God before us. I trust it is at least clear to those who have given me their hearing, that the elders were beyond doubt men; that they were men no longer on earth, but in heaven; that they constitute a new class seen for the first time above. Who compose them? I have not as yet sought to answer.

For my own part I strongly suspect that the twenty-four elders include the Old Testament saints as well as the New, up to the moment of the Lord's coming to receive them to Himself. I make this remark, because we find afterwards that when the change takes place, and the elders as such are no more seen, a new symbol is seen to take its place (ch. xix.). You have the Bride; but besides her you have certain persons that are said to be blessed—guests invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. It need scarce be said, that nobody thinks of inviting a bride to her own marriage feast: others may be invited there of course. It seems to me, therefore, very plain that others are to be at the marriage-supper of the Lamb besides the bride.

Hence nothing is more easy than to understand that the twenty-four elders might include both Old and New Testament saints, from Revelation iv. to chap.

xix., when the Bride and the guests are substituted for the elders. Then it becomes a question of the church in her own proper character of communion with Christ; and you find under the twenty-four elders a twofold company—the Bride, with others who were united for a certain end, but not in everything. This is merely a question of spiritual judgment, and depends on a great deal of scripture to decide it.

I do not therefore throw out more than a suggestion now. I have endeavoured to keep to the grand landmarks of the subject, which are especially necessary for all the children of God. What I have been saying makes this plain to any one. We see the wisdom of God in arranging this mystical history of the church. Had it been a literal history of the church, a prophetic mapping out of all with great plainness, the consequence would have been that people would have ceased to look for Christ's coming; but inasmuch as the seven churches were there before the apostle's mind at the time when this book was written, there was no check on the continual waiting for Christ. On the other hand, if the church tarried here below, these seven churches would expand, as it were, into a larger bearing; and as long as the church was continued, it would be always adding more and more completeness, more filling up, as it were, the previously unseen points which would then become obvious and salient.

This is the true way for faith; it is so that all the New Testament is written. If the Lord represents the ten virgins as showing Christendom waiting for Christ, it is the same virgins that went forth originally

and fell asleep afterwards, who go in with the Lord. No doubt we (looking back *ex post facto*, as people call it,) can see (when the history is behind us) that it was designed to take in the various generations of Christians. But as far as the parable is concerned, it contemplates only that one generation which was existing at the time the parable was put forth. In this I cannot but see the deep mind of God. Does it not seem to you to be consummate wisdom for Him so to write His word that there should be in it nothing at variance with the hope of the Christian in always expecting Christ, and yet that, when the delay takes place, you can see that He knew of the delay perfectly well, but that He did not open it out in word so as to hinder saints from always waiting for the Lord Jesus? Thus manifestly all is true, holy, good, and wisely ordered.

May the Lord bless His truth! May there be one desire given to the children of God, so that knowing Him as our life, having Him as our righteousness, we may wait for Him as the hope of our hearts!

THE COMING AND THE DAY OF THE LORD

(2. Thess. 2, 1—8)

THERE are various points of view in which it has pleased the Spirit of God to present the coming or presence of the Lord Jesus, and this partly because truth requires it (for there are different aspects of that coming); partly because the Spirit of God must apply the truth morally—that is, according to the need of those addressed, and as the occasion of unfolding the glory of God. Now as this is true of the Bible in general, and of every other part of the truth, so it applies equally to the great theme that I have before me this afternoon.

First of all, we may read in the word of God of the coming of the Lord Jesus as a broad general expectation. I speak of His presence now, or of His return. We have it thus presented in various parts of the New Testament. So it was preached by the apostles; so it

was looked for by those who believed. The Thessalonians themselves are an example of this application of the truth. They, on their conversion, did not merely confide in God through the knowledge of the gospel, but they "waited," as it is written, "for his Son from heaven," even for their deliverer from the wrath to come. This clearly is the most comprehensive aspect of the coming or presence of the Lord Jesus. It defines nothing that He was to do. Whether He was to make this earth His dwelling-place, and bless here below those who believe in Him, or whether He was to take them away from the earth to heaven, was not therein explained. There was the certain and, in itself, most influential fact, that the great object of faith is similarly the object of hope; that we have not merely a scene of blessedness to expect by and by, but the return of the same Person who "died for our sins according to the scriptures," and who was raised again from the dead according to the scriptures—the one to put away our evil, the other to bring in the full exhibition of the blessedness that is the portion of faith, showing it above all in His own glorious person. They looked for Him to come back again, and establish us who wait for Him in the same blessedness in which He stands Himself risen from the dead. Such is the distinct expectation presented in the word of God. It is the counsel of God. It is worthy of His Son, and of the atonement wrought by His Son. Impossible to say more! Other passages may expand, and we may apply, the blessed truth; but to rise higher than that which was worthy of God and His own Son in the deepest work of His love is impossible.

Now the Thessalonians were led by the Spirit of God into this hope from their conversion. Clearly, therefore, it is not some recondite truth that a Christian can afford to do without, nor is it a matter of slow growth, or that needs deep research. I grant you that, being a divine truth, no state or time will ever exhaust it. This is true of all revelation. The word savours of the God who has given it. Hence it is open to the simplest, and it rises above the deepest; and indeed there is nothing that more characterizes divinely revealed truth than this twofold aspect of it. It is the same in the highest degree with the persons of the Godhead; it is no less true of the incarnation, and of redemption. So it is with the hope.

Thus the Thessalonians are a beautiful sample of comparatively young believers who were led into the truth by divine teaching: not at all so as not to require more truth, but at the same time really taught of God, making it their own, and using it as all truth is meant to be used—*practically*; used for themselves in their relations with God—for themselves in their relations one with another, and, indeed, as to all men—the absorbing object of hope for the affections when the soul has been truly brought to God.

Indeed, this reminds me to say a word, my friends, to you who are here—I have no doubt very many children of God; but, it may be, not a few that have their doubts. To you, then, I would say with all love, to all who want this assurance, that not to have such a conviction is to lose after all an immense part of the blessing; and, therefore, if you do not know yourselves to be children of God, if you have not peace by faith

in Christ Jesus, as far as your enjoyment is concerned, you may be even more miserably off than before your conversion. You cannot now enjoy the world as before; nor can you enter with your old natural zest into pleasures as you are. Nay, what *ought* you to enjoy? How can it be with the sad consciousness of a want so grave? How take your ease where God's word so solemnly admonishes of the danger of slighting your real need? And the more thoroughly painful to those who do know the truth, because the blessing is so real, and so near to every one of them; and therefore I do most strongly exhort any who have not this known rest for their souls to look to God now, that they may find it in the Lord Jesus; nay, if it be His will, even by a few words of His grace, that you may taste it now. For let me tell you in the Lord's name, that He has done and suffered what justifies God in blessing you, not merely according to your thoughts, but according to His own. And God's blessing in the gospel is to bring you completely out of your own condition, as a ground on which to stand before God, and to plant you in another, even Christ. Your condition is that of the first man, Adam; the man that fell, having left God and abandoned the place of blessing in which he was put. But the Second man is come, and He it is who has triumphed; and the Holy Ghost is sent down from heaven now, not merely to dwell in the church, or to work in the way of spiritual gift, but to call out souls according to the riches of the grace of God, through the name of Jesus; and, therefore, the whole point of faith is this, that you call on the name of the Lord, abandoning all that you are, and confessing what you have done. This is repentance and

the call of faith. Repentance is when a soul pronounces judgment upon itself, according to the truth and character of God. It is a soul turning to God in the name of the Lord Jesus, and not merely receiving by faith the blessing which God can afford now to give to the very full through His Son, but also, and in consequence of this distrusting nature, judging self, assured that what we are is altogether unfit for the presence of God.

Now the whole practical life of a Christian is the working out of these two things. On the one hand there is the judgment of self day by day, and, consequently, readiness to confess our failures, more particularly anything that is positively against the Lord, and, of course, against man too; but there is on the other the hearty acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus by faith, with the blessing into which He brings. The whole course, therefore, of Christian experience is just the power of the Holy Ghost bringing the truth and grace of Christ to comfort us and to judge self—the life of the Second to set aside the first man. Bad teaching may have obscured all this; but, certainly, if you have indeed received the Lord Jesus, believing in His name, this is your portion, however feebly you may know it; and this is what you ought to be living in and not merely be learning, though surely to learn if you have ill known it. But if you rest on Him, then comes the blessed hope,—the same Jesus who came into this world, and in His death and resurrection displayed what God is toward me and you, after having displayed what man ought to be toward God in all His life—the same Jesus who died on the cross to put away the body of sin, and to show in His resurrection an altogether new estate for believing

man before God—the same Jesus is coming back again.

But then what is He going to do? Here it is that the presence of the Lord Jesus branches out into at least two great parts. He *is* coming. But it is evident that the broad teaching of the Bible (taking in now the Old Testament as well as the New—and we ought to take in both), the general truth of the coming of the Lord Jesus is this: He is going to establish that blessed time for which saints and prophets ever waited, since man fell into sin. God has not absolutely consigned this world to His enemy; He does not mean to allow Satan even an appearance of triumph long. I admit to you that, all through, Satan has seemed to gain nothing but victory; but he never does really. He may ruin himself, and has done so; he may ruin others, too, but God will manifestly triumph; as He has already done in perfection to the eye of faith through and in His Son. Jesus *has* won the victory, and this by suffering and blood and death. Consequently He has made it not merely to be a question of God's mercy saving souls, though of course this remains true; but, besides, it is made the highest righteousness on God's part to save souls. It is no strain of the divine prerogative, but what God *owes* the Lord Jesus. The Son of God spent Himself for God the Father, who, now and for evermore, will repay this wondrous debt, which, singularly blessed to say, He owes to Him who is the Son of His love, but also the Son of Man as such. Therein lies the reason why man is destined to such a wonderful place, as it explains also why God passes angels by. It is not but that angels, in their own primary estate and

personal qualities, may be superior to man. Assuredly they "excel in strength." Man, of the dust, is at best but a weak creature. But he is destined to reign with Christ, because the Son of God was pleased to become a man, and has accomplished redemption for him.

Therefore the incarnation is of all moment (besides being the very essence and substance of the orthodox faith), and, in order to our having part with Him to God's glory, Christ's death and resurrection. For man being fallen and guilty, Jesus, while the only holy and perfect man, nevertheless must suffer the consequences of all the ruin of man—must know the forsaking and judgment that came upon Him from God in the cross. Accordingly, having now risen above it, He is Himself gone—our life, righteousness, and peace—into the heavenly glory, but waits to come back again. All Christians professedly own this. All the creeds of Christendom acknowledge it—in general terms at least; and so far it is quite right. But then we shall find that the word of God, as must be the case, is always wiser, richer, and more profound than any forms of truth that ever were or can be drawn up by man—I care not who or what they are. Who will deny that God is incomparably better than man, or His word better than all the dogmas that have been founded upon it, or drawn from it?

The precious word of God I have in my hand shows us then, first, the grand but general expectation that He will come (or return, as we now say) to put down evil, and to establish good. Accordingly He will have a kingdom, not alone in an invisible way by the power of the Holy Ghost, but when He personally and visibly reigns over the earth. I do not say living on the earth—

this is going beyond scripture—yet none the less taking the earth in a most manifest manner under His direct power and government, and consequently meeting and accomplishing all the yearnings and expectations that were founded on Old Testament scripture; for the New in no way neutralizes the Old, but rather confirms it, while it also brings in “better things,” and the mystery hid from ages and from generations. The Lord will thus, in the most complete manner, accomplish the hope for which His saints and people were waiting from of old. Christianity, whilst it ushers in new and heavenly things after a new sort, seals the truth of the old and earthly things according to prophecy.

But is this all that scripture tells us? By no means. We do find it in the New Testament. Thus, when the apostle Peter preached to the Jews (Acts iii), he told them to “repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out.” What had been the consequence? “Times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord.” And how? By a fresh outpouring of the Spirit? No, but by sending Jesus Christ, and so fulfilling the prophecy. It is the more striking, because, if ever there was a blessed season of spiritual power here below, it was then; and then was the time, if it was simply to be a spiritual reign to be brought in by preaching and like means, to have held it out. But what they had then was only a sample of what was coming by and by. Now such is not the expectation that Peter presses, although it is true that the Holy Ghost will be poured out a second time. Then will be the latter rain, as Pentecost the former; but such is not the stated way, nor was it then the moment or suited occasion for

re-affirming that truth. What the apostle sets out is, that God will send Jesus Christ, who has been already fore-appointed. But alas! we find the Jews, instead of receiving the truth, immediately after reject this witness of it. When the enmity to the testimony of Jesus of Nazareth, risen and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to Israel, drew out Jewish hatred to the full, they displayed it in killing Stephen, another blessed witness of it. Thereon God brings out a remarkable change in His dealings—a turning-point in His ways. For the blessing, instead of now being found in Jerusalem, or presented to it only, flows away from it in strong tide. The church was scattered everywhere, and its members carried with them the seeds of eternal life. The apostle of the Gentiles in due course was called. Philip meanwhile is used in Samaria, in a way altogether unprecedented outside the favoured people, though God would not give the full distinctive blessing of the Holy Ghost in an independent way. The apostles Peter and John are sent down in order to link up the work, and make it practically one. There is no countenance given to human independency in the things of God.

We find, thenceforward, that the current of the blessing sets in towards the Gentiles—to the way that is desert, to the Ethiopian stranger, to Azotus. Still more conspicuously, the apostle Paul brings out in due time among the Gentiles the distinctive features of Christianity and the church. With this goes a most important difference in the way in which the presence of the Lord is presented. As long as it was a question of Israel, the prominent thought was the Lord Jesus com-

ing, and in divine grace restoring and exalting the very people that crucified Him. And then will all the nations of the earth be blest; for they cannot as a whole know this, till Israel becomes by divine mercy the first of nations. Such is God's order.

Thus the rejection of the truth and of the grace of God by the Jews led to the call of the apostle of the Gentiles, and to that remarkable development of the truth of God, which we now know in what is commonly called Christianity. And this, as remarked, gives a very important modification to the truth we are now considering. For what is the essential outward peculiarity of Christianity as such? Is it not a Saviour absent on high, rather than a king governing His own people Israel, and others—the Gentiles—blest under His benignant sway? It is not the power of God putting down Satan manifestly in the world, and the earth yielding her increase, but the Holy Ghost giving victory over evil by faith, and saints separated from the world. All those expectations belonged to the hopes of Israel, and will be accomplished when Israel re-appears in the scene by and by. Christianity, I repeat, in no wise sets aside such a prospect, but rather seals its truth, however postponed for the present. At the same time it shows us what is altogether different, namely, the King rejected instead of being received by His people; and the messengers of the King, instead of finding homage when He went up to heaven, themselves likewise rejected. The proffered blessing was thus completely discarded by Israel for the time; and, during their interval of eclipse, the Gentiles became the direct object of God's testimony, and the channel of privilege in what

is called Christianity. You see it yourselves. You know what the condition of Israel is, and the extraordinary fact that the people who have the Hebrew scriptures least of all understand their own best boon. They have an older history than any in the earth can really prove,—I do not say can *boast* of,—for of what will not man boast? and so much the more, because he has no sound foundation for it. But the Jews have a legitimate and most ancient history, and this, too, divinely guaranteed and proved. And, more than this, they have a future—a most sure and glorious future; but their future will be found, where they least look for it, under the shelter of His wings whom they foully scorned and crucified—even of Jehovah Messiah, the God of Israel.

During the time, then, of Israel's refusal of the Anointed One, Jesus is not only rejected by them, but He is exalted in heaven where He takes a new place. Never do you read in scripture, that when born of a woman and under the law He was born Head of the church; never do you hear God saying in His word that when Jesus lived and laboured on earth He was saluted even as priest. Never is it written there that He died Head of the church. Not so; but when He was raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand, then and there He was given by God Head to the church. The epistle to the Ephesians furnishes the positive demonstration of this truth, the epistle to the Colossians just the same; and I need hardly say there is no scripture that has even the appearance of contradicting it. All contrary thoughts are mere human speculation, or the rubbish of tradition, or that dry heap of mummies,—scientific theology. With all evidence

scripture proves that a new state of things came in with the descent of the Holy Ghost, consequent upon the death and resurrection of Christ, and His heavenly place of exaltation, where He is now in glory. For the Holy Ghost is personally sent down, as I need not insist, in a manner altogether unexampled; and Christianity exhibits, not only the gospel of God's grace, but the unfolding of these two great truths:—first, Christ Head of the church at the right hand of God; and, secondly, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven baptizing Jews and Gentiles that believe into that one body, the church. Never is there a trace of such a body before; never so much as a promise that any should be united as members to Christ. If one had talked about members of His body, even when He was here below, the thing would have been unintelligible. Nobody contemplated such a relationship. Not only no one thought of it, but God Himself did not reveal it. It was the mystery that was hidden from ages and generations. Now it is revealed.

As this has an immense bearing on all other truth, giving additional force to what had been known before, while it opens out vast tracts wholly unknown, so the hope of the Church is affected in the most intimate manner by so great a change,—Christ not received by Israel, and reigning over them and the Gentiles here below, but exalted to the right hand of God in heaven, and there made Head of a new thing. Hence the apostle Paul brings out, according to the Holy Ghost, the capital truth that, instead of the old people of God waiting for Christ to come and bless them and so all nations (Psalm lxvii.) upon the earth, Christ will re-

ceive the Church to Himself above, so that, in the day when He appears and accomplishes the old hopes, He will be glorified in His saints and admired in all that believed, risen from the dead or changed into His own glorious likeness. Thus there will be no incongruous mixture of those risen and changed with men in earthly bodies. There will be the two immense, and at the same time simultaneous, scenes of blessing,—the earth with Jews and nations blessed under His reign, and the heavenly places filled with those that are then in a condition suited to heaven; for “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” But that same Jesus who is the Head of heavenly glory will reign over all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues; and therefore Israel, who were promised the first earthly place, will have it in the mercy and faithfulness of God,—a people truly converted and prepared to receive the Lord “in that day.”

It is plain that all would be confusion if these two purposes of God were both in operation at the same time. Supposing, for instance, a Jew converted now, if God were forming both an earthly and a heavenly people together, might he not say with reason, “These two callings perplex me sorely; I do not know which to choose. On the whole it seems to me that a heavenly place would be better than an earthly. At the same time an earthly place is what all my fathers have been waiting for; and so I am not exactly sure which I ought to close with.” But in the wise goodness of God there is no such confusion; for now that the earthly calling is vanished, it is a question of heaven or hell. But, more than this, such a direction would introduce

the utmost doctrinal ambiguity, because the manner in which God calls the heavenly people to walk is on a different footing from that of such as are called with an earthly calling. You can understand it from your own households. You do not teach your children to do exactly what you tell your servants to do—at least I hope not. You do not put them under the same régime. There is not only a difference of relationship, but a different line of conduct suited to each relationship. And let me lay it down as a weighty truth, which you will find verified in scripture and indeed in morality, that all our duties flow from our relationships. Consequently the first question is to find what is my relationship, because then I have to act accordingly. Precisely in this way it is that the earthly people, having rejected Christ and the blessing, have forfeited all for the time; and so true is this, that the Jews, notwithstanding all their wit and intelligence,—and they are behind no nation in these, and indeed in other great qualities,—yet afford the melancholy spectacle of being of all peoples within Christendom the most ignorant of their own sacred books. There is no Christian so ignorant of the Bible as the Jew; and this is not confined to illiterate Jews of our day or any other. I am not speaking of such alone. Take the best of Abraham's seed, and you will find the ignorance of scripture most remarkable in the very chief rabbins themselves. There are none more grossly in the dark as to the divine truth than their most celebrated writers. This shows us that blindness has passed upon them, and is a practical comment on the word of the Lord.

But now we poor Gentiles are brought in. There is then an evident change; and I refer to this in support of what I have been already saying, as far as it goes. The apostle Paul brings out with admirable fulness and precision, not only the call of the Gentiles, but the formation of those that belong to Christ into the church of God. It is not simply a people who have the gospel preached to them, or who confess His name and are baptized, but really united to Him as members of His body by the Holy Ghost who is given to this end. These are waiting for the Lord Jesus, but not to govern them on the earth; for this is not their relationship to Christ. They await Him to take them out of the earth to be with Himself in heaven. It is not denied that they will reign with Christ over the earth; but I say that their own proper home—the home of their hearts, and the sphere in which they will have their brightest glory—will be with Christ in heavenly places. Such is the teaching *e.g.* of Ephesians i.

But this clears the way at once. Also, let me remark, that it is a very important point practically for all Christians; for there is nothing more common, for instance, than to speak of Christ as if He were the king of the church: even our fine and commonest hymns say so,—as “my Prophet, Priest, and King.” Do I doubt that he was an excellent man who wrote it? I have not a word to say against him, but very much to urge against the thought. We must not consecrate grave errors under the shelter of the best of names: least of all does the time allow it now. It is a moment when everything is shaking,—when a great deal that is good is put in question by the bad, but (I am thankful to

God) a great deal that is bad by the good. It is therefore a time when no soul can afford to treat slightly the truth of God. His children will soon require it all; they will need firm support for their feet. I repeat, then, that the relation of king is true for Israel, but is not true for the Christian or for the church. Christ is the *Lord* of the Christian—the absolute Lord of all He has bought. Therefore it is not in the smallest degree to weaken subjection to Christ; for, contrariwise, the relationship of a father with his child is a closer one than that of a king with his subject. Again, take the relationship of a husband and wife: what can be so intimate as this? Such is the relationship of Christ and the church; and, therefore, to take the old notion of Christ being the King of the church is just unwittingly to be Judaized; it is to be drawn aside by a notion. It is that which is perfectly true for an Israelite, and so will be accomplished by and by; for Christ will not in the same way espouse them. In a vague general way Jehovah will be their Husband. It is used in this way in the Old Testament; but in no sense will it be true of them that they are “members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” He who says so is merely imagining vain things. He has no scripture for it.

The word of God brings in, then, this near and blessed relationship, and along with this a hope suited to it. The hope is, that He who is our Head and our Bridegroom will come for His Bride, and receive those who are so closely united to Himself. Thus when He does come, it is not to reign over them as His people in their place, but to take them as His bride (and you can see, I may assume, that it is suitable, and must be so) to His place.

Surely, when we think who Christ is, and what the home of Christ is in the Father's house, we can understand that more is due to the Son of God, than merely to beautify this poor world, or to banish the elements of evil out of it. That is all true, and will be for His people on earth; but He has got a home of love He has known before the earth was founded, and into the Father's house He will not be ashamed to bring those He is not ashamed even now to call His brethren.

Accordingly, the Lord Himself presents this very hope in John xiv. It is not, therefore, an absolutely new thing; though there is a modification of it in the teaching of Paul. You will find, accordingly, in the two earlier gospels that He presents things in connection with the earth, and consequently with the Jews as well as the nations. Luke xii. brings in heaven morally. But in the gospel of John the Lord leaves out all about Jerusalem and Israel, and presents exclusively this blessed hope to the Christian—that, as surely as He went away to heaven, He is coming again from heaven, and will gather us to be with Himself there.

The apostle Paul brings out this precious hope in the first epistle to the Thessalonians. The occasion for it was this: these Christians were waiting for Christ with such simplicity, that they, in fact, fondly imagined that no Christian was ever to die. They were so filled with Christ's return, that they believed that the Lord might come while they themselves were living. It was quite right to be always waiting—quite wrong to suppose that no one could die. Accordingly the enemy took advantage of death having made an inroad among the Thessalonians; and inasmuch as they were totally un-

prepared for it, they were quite cast down. Instead of having peaceful confidence in the Lord's love, they sorrowed overmuch, fearing that those who died would miss some blessing when the Lord Jesus returned. We are not to suppose that they fancied that such would be lost; but they did conceive that not to be upon earth waiting for Christ at His return would involve those who died in a great and irreparable loss. Not so, says the Spirit of God by the apostle. The Lord Jesus Christ, when He returns, will first of all raise those that are sleeping. "The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." That is, there will be a barely appreciable interval between the dead saints raised and the living saints caught up. Both shall be translated to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be for ever with Him. Now, clearly this put an end to the notion that the saints who meanwhile fall asleep were to suffer particularly through their death.

But more than that. The apostle continues, and shows that when the Lord Jesus appears in glory, He will bring along with Him those saints that have slept by Him—not their spirits only, but themselves (body, soul, and spirit) glorified, of course. The way in which the dead saints, as well as those that may be till then alive, can thus come with Him is this: He is coming in person, first of all, to change them into His likeness. Whether asleep in death or still alive, they will be caught up to be with the Lord; so that when He comes in judgment of the habitable world (*i.e.* in His day) they will accompany Him in glory. In this we

find the two great parts of the presence of the Lord Jesus. That is to say, He will first come *for* the saints, and in the second place He will come *with* them. Both are called "*the coming, or presence, of the Lord.*" They are the two main aspects—if one may so say—of Christ's coming: the first, to gather the heavenly saints to Himself; the second, to bring them with Him when He appears in glory. It is the second part of the coming of Christ that connects itself with Old Testament hopes (as, for instance, with Zech. xiv.: "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee"). Clearly, therefore, as we now know, they must have been raised and taken up to be with Christ above; and, as we also know for certain, we who are alive on the earth waiting for Jesus cannot be changed and caught up with the raised ones, to be with the Lord above, unless He Himself have come to this end.

Therefore His coming must be in the first place *for* the saints—raising the dead, changing the living; and then there is, further, His coming with them all. But this does not determine the length of interval between the two. One cannot see in 1 Thess. iv. and v. any sufficient reason why all this might not be practically at the same hour, as far as that scripture is concerned. We are dependent, therefore, upon other testimony. Let no soul receive anything without divine warrant for it. I beseech all my brethren and sisters that are here to beware of haste on a subject so important: God will surely give sufficient light, even for the simplest. Never be hurried into a conviction; never give up what you have—if, indeed, you have received it as the truth of God—until positive ground of scrip-

ture be shown to the contrary. On the other hand, holding fast whatever you know to be the truth, always have a mind open to receive more.

Again, the Second Epistle was written not to give the Thessalonians comfort about the dead saints, disabusing their minds of their needless sorrow, but to dispel a delusion brought in by false teachers about the living—themselves included. The first does not seem to have been a question of wrong teaching, but of their own erroneous notions—a hasty inference from what was most true and right. But in the second case the enemy was at work. The truth that had been blessed to their souls was being undermined by the confusion and false assertions of unscrupulous Judaizing teachers. Such were ordinarily the persons who ruined the church. Satan had used these Judaizers to shake and alarm their souls by confounding the *coming* of the Lord with His *day*. From these they seemed to have imbibed the apprehension, as they were at that time suffering grievous persecution (which had already caused anxiety to the apostle's mind about them—1 Thess. iii.), that these persecutions might be the predicted tribulation, and that this tribulation was, in some sense, "the day of the Lord." Thus everything was jumbled together in their thoughts. There were three errors joined in one. That is to say, they confounded the presence of the Lord with His day, and His day with the tribulation, and their actual troubles with that future tribulation. It is evident that all was a sea of confusion in their souls.

First of all, then, the Spirit of God explains to them

the moral character of that day. In the first chapter of our epistle He shows them that the Lord will certainly appear with angels of His might in flaming fire; but that the day of the Lord is to deal judicially with the enemies, and in no wise to let persecution fall on His own saints. It is now that the faithful are called to suffer persecution as a privilege, and be prepared for it, as he had previously intimated in his former letter; but the day of the Lord will be precisely the time when there will be no persecution more for the people of God. For, in fact, that day will display two facts—the saints of God in perfect rest and joy and blessedness with Christ; and their enemies under retributive dealings from God, who will lay His hand heavily upon them, bringing in death and destruction. No doubt a graduated scale will not be wanting, suitable to different measures of guilt; for God in judgment does not fail to take into consideration all circumstances. Even in His judgment of the living this will be in measure true; absolutely so in the judgment of the dead at the end of all.

This, then, clearly set aside a good deal that the false teachers had sought to infuse; but, in the second chapter, the portion I have read deals with the error in a very direct and full manner, besides giving us, as God's explanations always do, positive truth independently of the error that is dispelled.

First, the apostle beseeches his brethren "by the coming of the Lord Jesus." Here it is my conviction that our common authorized version is perfectly correct. I am aware that there are not a few scholars who will have it that it means "*concerning*," or "in regard to the

coming." There is not the slightest doubt that the word (*ὑπὲρ*) will bear this; but there is no necessity for it everywhere—here rather the contrary. For there is an element in the matter, which those who so reason do not appear to have taken properly into consideration. It is manifest that you cannot decide on the construction of a phrase by looking at a single word; you must look at its bearings, and weigh all that is connected with it. Now in this case the apostle beseeches them. He is beseeching *by*. Now, it is a regular usage, in the language that the Holy Ghost employed in the New Testament, to apply this very word in the sense "*by*," or "*on account of*," where it goes with a phrase of entreaty. No doubt, if there were not a connection of prayer or beseeching, the preposition would quite well bear the meaning of "*in respect to*," or "*in behalf of*." Such a meaning is as common as it is legitimate; but not so with a verb of entreaty. The English version is therefore, in my judgment, perfectly justified, while the proposed change is otherwise inadmissible. "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and* our gathering together unto him." Mark the forcibly expressed connection. The gathering together of the saints from the earth, which clearly takes in both the living and the dead (these raised, those changed) is dependent on the presence of the Lord Jesus. They are associated facts in the mind of the Spirit, who

* Not only is there no need to insert "*by*" in italics, but it seems to me an injury to the force of one article for the two clauses. "Our gathering together unto Him" is intended to be set forth as consequent on the "presence of our Lord Jesus Christ," both forming one combined idea.

thereby entreats the brethren, by the apostle, "that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as by us, as that the day of the Lord is *present*." Here one is obliged to differ from the authorized version. For this I am sorry; but at the same time it is inevitable for the truth's sake.

There are two points erroneously given: one in the common Greek text, the other in the common English Bible. "The day of Christ" is not the right reading in this place. All scholars, let them be who they may, Romanists, Lutherans, Calvinists, high, broad, or low church, in short, every competent person, no matter where he may be, acknowledges the truth of what has just been affirmed, which I state thus strongly that no one present may imagine that I insist on any word as a better reading, for which there is not the most satisfactory evidence. It is "the day of the Lord" in the best MSS., &c. Now the "day of the Lord," although closely connected with the "day of Christ," is not absolutely the same. Not that I propose to discuss such nice distinctions now, because this would involve details: I confine myself to notorious fact. "The day of the Lord" means the time when the Lord will deal judicially with this world, with nations, with living men, with the earth. The Thessalonians were misled into the strange idea—strange at least to our minds—of confounding the trouble they were then enduring with "that day." Of course, those who taught them so must have held a kind of spiritual day of the Lord; that is, they could not have meant that the Lord was personally to appear in order to bring in that day,

but that the then time of great and sore trouble for the people of God might be justly called "the day of the Lord." This partial preparatory application of the phrase is common in the Old Testament, but it is not so used in the New Testament, which only employs it in its full and final sense.

Carefully observe, however, that what they taught was *not* that it was "at hand," or soon coming, but that it was really come. Such is the unequivocal meaning of the word (ἐνέστηκε). It occurs in the same form in about half a dozen places of the New Testament. I think it may be proved to a plain English reader that what I am stating now is certainly correct. Thus, in Romans viii. 38, "*things present*" (ἐνεστώτα) is the same word. What makes it more striking is that "*things to come*" (μέλλοντα) is used also, and another word. Now if the former meant "*things at hand*," there could be no contrast; but this there is very decidedly between "*things present*" and "*things to come*." In short, who could set over against each other "*things at hand*" and "*things to come*," if the former word signified pretty much the same thing as the latter? In 1 Corinthians iii. 22, the same contrast occurs. In 1 Corinthians vii. 26, "for the *present** necessity" is the same word: a necessity "at hand" is not the sense, but one already existing. So again with Hebrews ix. 9, we have the same word, meaning the time then *present*, and certainly

* Dean Alford says, "*Instant, already begun*; for this is the meaning of ἐνεστῶσαν, not *imminent*, shortly to come." But is this sound English? He means what I do; but his expression seems faulty. "*Instant*" would be generally considered as substantially like "*imminent*," rather than as "*present*."

not a future season. In Gal. i. 4 we read of "this *present* evil world" or age. The world to come will not be evil but blessed. The present age, and the present age only, is evil. It is abundantly plain that in these cases the word not only means "actually there," but it can mean nothing else. The meaning "*at hand*," or just coming, would destroy the sense in all these occurrences of the word. I do not recollect any other in the New Testament. I have named five instances, and this in 2 Thess. ii. 2 makes six.

Another form of the verb appears in 2 Timothy iii. 1, where it is said that in the last days perilous times shall come. But even here, though future, not perfect, it does not mean "shall be at hand," but *actually there*. The reason why I do not dwell on this last is that the tense is not the same. The same force is found, as far as I know, in every occurrence of the word in other books, as the Apocrypha and the profane authors. I have gone into the matter the more because it used to be alleged, and may be still repeated, that in three or four cases in classic Greek the word has the sense of "*at hand*." But I have examined those instances carefully, and am prepared to show that there the word does not require, and I think will not even bear, the meaning "at hand" any more than in the New Testament. But it ought to be clear that the word of God does not demand such search into a few stray passages in Greek orators or comedians, even if doubtful, for the purpose of deciding its own meaning. The uniform sense in every other place of scripture ought to prevail, and must, I think, in an unbiassed judgment. Thus, then, as there cannot be a doubt that

the true text is "the day of the Lord," so "is present" is the true translation of the last word.

But observe the importance of this. The apostle entreats them by the presence of the Lord, which was full of blessedness, as it was their gathering to be with Him and bound up with it, not to be alarmed about the day of the Lord as if it could be now come, as was pretended by some. Such is the genuine meaning and drift of his appeal to their hearts. You, who know that you are going to be caught up to the Lord Jesus at His presence, do not you be harassed by the false cry that the day of the Lord is come. It is all a mistake. The day of the Lord is not present yet. And as this is a motive drawn from their own hope and knowledge of His love against receiving that egregious error, so he strengthens it by a reason drawn from the state of the world and of the Christian testimony. They ought not to expect that day till there come the falling away. Such is the strict force — *the* apostasy; "a falling away" is feeble. "The apostasy" is the word. By this he means the public abandonment of Christian truth in the earth, and no doubt of more than Christian truth, but this peculiarly. Yet I doubt not that at the same time, when Christendom will abandon the Christian faith, the Jews also will fall into the dreadful snares predicted for the last days.

I admit that to men at large all this is unpalatable. Those who indulge in hopeful visions of the progress of society do not like to hear of the apostasy, unless it can be fastened on some dark corner of Europe apart from themselves, where this only or the like can be treated as the apostasy. They care not to weigh seriously the

warning of God which limits it to no quarter of Christendom, whatever locality may be its central seat. But be not deceived. Do not heed those fair promises of men. My friends, as surely as God has written here of that which is before Christendom, the apostasy is coming, and rapidly. What means the fact that in our own day we see such an unexampled increase of atheistic teaching, and this not among the openly profane but in church and chapel goers? Why, you can hardly take up a modern history, say of Greece, but you are flooded with infidelity. If you dip into a modern book of geology, incredulity fills its pages—the denial of active divine intervention. The anatomy of man is tainted with the poison, which infects also the natural history of beasts. These men industriously use every opportunity for spreading their denial, I might even say, of common conscience about God. Everything now is taking the form of rationalism or positivism, at any rate amongst those who pretend to be the party of progress. It is the same with metaphysics and ethics, as with the men of material science. And the most distressing symptom is not that you have a crackbrained philosopher in France teaching his fellows to look at and worship God in a mother, a wife, and a child, but sensible and clever men in this practical age accepting his atheism. One can understand his formal worship of humanity, and his wretched trinity of man; but at the same time, while one can see the madman in every word and thought of the kind, the gravest sign to me is, that in a sober practical country like England, and among men of disciplined minds, who can scarcely ignore the Bible and might at the least have profited

by the wicked folly of M. Comte to steer clear of it, this is, I believe, the popular philosophy of young England. Such is the tendency at the universities of the favourite books even on logic and political economy. Those who used to be famous for their sound Anglicanism and old-fashioned conservatism are now publishers of this self-sufficient demoralizing trash. Hence, works of this sort, with poetry to match, are found on the tables of almost all educated England,—particularly, I am sorry to say, among the higher classes, though the poison trickles down to the bottom of the garment, through all the artizan classes of this and other countries.

No wonder the leaders of infidelity clap their hands at their successes high and low; *they* at least know very well what must be the result of the indifference and infatuation of those who might be expected to stand in the gap. They know well that youths cannot have atheism insinuated in text-books on logic, &c., without reaping by-and-by a whirlwind from that which is sown there. They know well that in every quarter men are drinking from sources different from and opposed to revelation, and they do not exaggerate the results. Nor is it confined to collegians or speculative men; it ramifies gradually all classes, and especially the shrewd hard-reasoning sons of toil in the north. Nay, it is found increasingly amongst those whose profession it is to preach the truth. I do not mean that these are open infidels: perhaps it might be safer for others and more honest in themselves if they were. I do not mean to say that they are prepared to go all lengths with their guides; but there can be no doubt that a great

deal of value, admiration, and study is bestowed on the chief perverters of the public mind as "thinkers" by a growing mass of Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist divines. It has long been so with Romanists. No doubt there is very much more that Satan aims at bringing in; but the issue of what is even now at work will be what is here called "the apostasy."

Nor will this be all; there is another step—that the man of sin will be revealed. For just as God had a man of righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ, so Satan will have a man of sin. Thus there is, first, the systematic abandonment, not perhaps of Christian forms, but of revealed and professed Christian truth: then will arrive a personal expression of man's will without God who puts himself at the head of it. There will not be wanting a man to lead the evil when the right moment comes. This is the true meaning and place of the man of sin; the Holy Spirit furnishes here a picture of him spiritually considered. If you want to see him politically, you must look at Daniel xi. 36, where the king that does according to his own will is the self-same personage here described religiously, if one may so speak of Anti-christ. Daniel naturally treats the king in connection with the Jews, with the land of Palestine, which is clearly to be his habitat, and with the kings of the north and of the south and their conflicts. The apostle looks at the same person in connection with corrupted Christendom giving up the truth; and accordingly his description is of this sort: he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

I am aware that many of the old divines, some of them excellent men withal, used to apply all this to the Pope. I have not the slightest sympathy with the Pope, or anything in principle or practice that belongs to his system; at the same time I dare not be so false to the word of God as to allow such exaggerations. Not so: even the apostasy will be a more thorough and deadly departure from revelation, and will engulf Protestants and Papists alike. Does Popery, bad as it is, so deny fundamental truth, that a man who is trained in or even perverted into it cannot be saved? This I do not believe. Popery denies neither the Trinity nor mediation. I believe Christians have been found within its borders. So far from accepting the notion that the Pope is the antichrist, I believe that there have been Christian men in all grades of its priesthood, secular and regular, probably, among the Popes. At the same time I acknowledge that of all circles whence a soul can be saved, there is none to my own mind so horribly offensive to the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. That a man may there be converted and live and die is to me simply a proof of the immense mercy of God, not at all of anything good in the Popish system. But while thus stating candidly and explicitly my firm belief as to this, I say again that in 2 Thess. ii. looms a future system of yet more fatal evil. Finally a man takes the place of God, and is worshipped as such (not as the servant of His servants, or the vicar of Christ).

Thus the first overture of Satan is his last triumph apparently. "*Apparently*," I say; for it is never anything more on Satan's part; it is the last seeming

triumph of the enemy before the Lord comes in judgment. What man was tempted by in the garden of Eden was to become as God, knowing good and evil. What Satan seems to gain in this worst development of the latter day will be the more openly taking and allowed the place of God; and so much the more because the law had run its course, and ought to have been respected; the gospel will have run its course, and ought to have been glorified. But if souls are not won by the grace of God, the worse they become by His testimonies rejected or depraved. The more you hear the truth and are in the midst of its profession, so much the more you show your own impenitent heart, if you do not bow to the God who surrounds you with such a blessing. Therefore the apostasy and the man of sin are not after Judaism only but Christianity, according to the analogy of His past dealings and the ways of men, no less than the plain word of God which unveils the end of this age.

This last is the ground which I take as decisive. It is according to His solemn declarations, that when His fullest testimony is definitively abandoned, there will follow the most awful time of evil and judgment of the earth. The unbelief and ingratitude of the world for the blessings of Christianity will have for its result God sending them strong delusion. Did they not trifle with the truth, and despise His grace? Did they not go back to tradition, and philosophy, and, in principle, to heathenism—in fine, on to the apostasy and the man of sin? Perhaps this may sound to some strange and strong. But the word of God is wiser than men. And, after all, why should you wonder? At the present

time University folk, and many more men of intellect, are going wild about Plato and Aristotle, or their modern successors. What were those of old? Idolaters, indeed, but also Pantheists or Atheists. Tutors or parents may plead that it is only their philosophy that is sought after. Depend upon it, the connection between these things is far more intimate than people imagine.

Again, observe the revived tendency to the love of religious show in building, music, and ritual, with the most egregious pretensions on the part of the hierophants. I need not tell you that there is a vast deal of all this in London, and that a powerful impetus has been given to it quite lately. I do not speak of Popery, because at least some Protestants shame the Papists, going far beyond them in the absurdity of their doings in green and gold, in posture and imposture. But what I affirm is, that all these are indications of what is coming. Little premonitions they may be, in some eyes, but of unparalleled evil I assuredly count them. Even if positivism, for instance, were restricted for the present to those who are accepted as thinkers, be assured the hour is not distant—in the present immediate circulation of thought—when their blasphemous materialism will percolate by degrees through the lower strata of society. When this arrives, the final plans of Satan will follow rapidly—a dreadful day for Christendom, and not for England only. Yet what country has been such a breakwater against error as the favoured land in which we live? The upshot will be not superstition, nor idolatry alone, but the antichrist. How bitterly will the despisers of prophecy be disappointed! The

devil, after all, is wiser than they, for he is using the most opposite parties to bring about that which none of them suspect—the apostasy and the man of sin.

In order that this should come, the restraint must have been removed. Hence the apostle refers them to this: “When I was yet with you, I told you these things; and now ye know what withholdeth.” The predicted issue has been postponed and hindered by a mighty obstacle. It might have been, I suppose, soon after Christ went to heaven; for there was no lack of Judaism and Gentile philosophy, not to speak of evil and unbelief, in the world then. Why was it that their evil did not carry the day against Christians then? Because the power of the Holy Ghost hindered it. The Holy Ghost came down from heaven, and idolatry became at last ashamed to show its face, slinking behind imperial power and philosophic special pleading, but at length into holes and corners among the rude and gross, till the empire formally gave it up. It was thus overthrown in its high places; and the consequence is that Christianity has nominally prevailed in all the more civilized countries of the earth from that time to this. When the result which I have alluded to comes to pass, God will pour a spirit of judicial blindness over Christendom, just as He did on Israel, and of old on Egypt. A heart waxed fat characterized the Jew at the first coming of Christ. This will be yet more awfully renewed in Christendom before His second coming, and this simultaneously with the removal of the great restraint that God opposes to the uprising of the long working mystery of lawlessness. It will then manifestly reign without a check in the world. This

is what the apostle mentions here, and in very remarkable terms. "Now ye know," says he, "what withholdeth." Purposely, it appears to me, the Spirit of God did not explain; not through fear of the emperor certainly (whom it could in no serious way disturb), but with perfect wisdom, because the withholding power might not bear exactly the same form at one time as another. The ancient fathers in general conceived that the great let or hindrance alluded to was the Roman empire. Hence the early Christians used to pray for the empire with especial earnestness, because they believed that as long as it lasted, there could not be the apostasy, or the man of sin (*i.e.*, antichrist). I believe they were substantially right, although, like many others, their view was narrow and incomplete.

When the Roman empire fell, I dare not insinuate that the apostasy came; nor do I believe, for the reasons already given, that it can be intelligently sustained that the antichrist rose up. Yet the Pope no doubt did gradually claim ecumenical rights as a bishop in a wholly unscriptural and grossly ambitious manner. Only I deny that this is what the antichrist means. The Roman empire was, we know, broken up, and this gave occasion for the vaulting ambition of the Papacy with abominable idolatry and the cruellest persecution. But we are approaching times of radical change and far-spread convulsion in the earth. Of this no thoughtful man has the slightest doubt; but it will not yet be the removal of the hindrance. This will remain, both while the church is here and as long as there is government sanctioned by God; for this last also I believe to be kept up by the Spirit. It is not true that the Holy

Ghost only works in the salvation of souls, or in the church. There is a controlling power exercised by the Spirit of God. There is a providential maintenance of government in the world. As long as this lasts, the apostasy cannot be—certainly not the revelation of the man of sin. The person may be there, but he cannot come out in Satan's unchecked power; but directly God is pleased to let go all divinely-sanctioned government, as well as the manifestation of His grace in the church, then the coast will be clear for the enemy to do his worst. Satan will immediately embrace his long-coveted opportunity: then will be the manifestation of the man of sin. So it is said here, "The mystery of iniquity [lawlessness] doth already work." It was working from the days of the apostles. "Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

It is thus evident that there is a person who restrains, as well as a restraining power or system. I am not aware of any other to which this so admirably applies as to the Spirit of God. It must be remembered that the Holy Ghost is both a person and a power. You may speak of the Spirit of God figuratively, referring to His energy, operation, or character of action; or you may speak of Him as a Divine person. Here the apostle speaks of both a restraint and a restrainer: of what else could he adopt both these ways of speech? The Spirit of God, then, appears to me to be a far larger and truer way of putting the matter—not necessarily Himself acting in the church, but also as controlling in the world. Take it, then, as including His presence in the church and His power in the world, which acts up to a

given epoch as a restraint upon the devil. Then, when the term of fresh striving, or rather of restraining, is exhausted, the church is taken out of the scene, and soon after government falls directly into Satan's hands. God is pleased to allow a mighty convulsion to take place; and as great political revolutions are apt to end in reaction, and a popular chief to seize the throne, so it will be in that day. The beast is said to emerge out of what is called the sea (Rev. xiii.); that is to say, an imperial power rises out of the political confusion. The proofs time will not permit me to state now; but this I cannot doubt to be the prospect before the West in prophecy.

This entirely falls in with the statement of the apostle here. "Then," says he, "shall that wicked one be revealed." I quite agree with those who take the word "wicked" as altogether too feeble. It should be "*that lawless one.*" I grant you that all lawlessness must be wickedness; but all wickedness does not exactly take the shape of lawlessness. An unfaithful person might act ill in his ways, but still own a real authority above him. Lawlessness supposes not only evil but the entire rejection of all superior authority. It is the worst public form of wickedness, especially in those who used and were bound to own law. "Then shall that lawless one be revealed." We saw "*the mystery of lawlessness*" before. There is a link between the two, and a contrast: the lawlessness that wrought secretly is headed up in the openly lawless one, directly the letting power ceases, the letter being gone. "And then shall that lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall reveal with the spirit of his mouth, and shall

destroy with"—what? His presence? Certainly. Yet this is not what is said, but "the brightness"—or the *manifestation*—"of His presence." Why say the shining forth of it, if His presence is necessarily seen by every eye? Where would be the accuracy of saying the manifestation of His presence, if it were, in its own nature and character, a manifest thing?

This points to what is so very important in the first verse of this chapter, where we have the presence or coming of the Lord. In the eighth verse we have not this, but the *manifestation* of it. Can you not understand that the Lord is to present Himself, without being seen by the world, making Himself visible simply to those for whom He comes, and whom He gathers to Himself? In due time, having sent out fresh testimony, but finally allowed the worst evil to ripen up into the last fearful head, He comes in judgment with His saints. This evidently falls in with what I have already shown to be the two parts of the coming of Christ. And the reason for the interval, it will be observed, lies here. First, as long as the church is on earth, with the Holy Ghost acting in personal presence and power, there cannot be full development either in the apostasy or in the manifestation of the man of sin. This consequently is one obvious reason why the Lord—as it seems to me necessarily—gathers His own to be with Himself before the evil of man and of Satan rises to such a climax that He must come and judge it.

But there is another reason involved in what has been already said. The Lord has signified His purpose to have another witness. There is to be the preparation of an earthly people for Him, when the heavenly people are

taken away to be with Himself. The Spirit of God—though not in personal presence as now—will not fail to seal for God a certain number from all Israel. He will also, I apprehend, deal with the consciences of countless Gentiles. (Rev. vii.) If it were not so, the sad issue would be that, when the Lord Jesus comes in judgment of evil at the end of this age, there would be a universal waste, a wilderness scene, without a single soul to welcome its Lord—without even a nucleus for the millennial earth. But no; He will prepare a people for His appearing. He will not merely spare the dark and distant parts of the earth, but, as always, a remnant elsewhere; and so it is, then, that God will quicken, bless, and use a remnant of Jews. Some of them will carry the gospel of the kingdom to all nations. When the Lord Jesus gathers to Himself the heavenly saints, according to the first verse of this chapter—when He brings them to His Father's house, during the interval before they return with Him in glory, the earth's lawlessness will rise up to denial of God and direct worship of man. The Spirit of God in the midst of that wicked state will work, not in the way of communion and present blessing, but of prophecy or anticipated good to individual souls. The testimony, though true, is feeble; there may not be such power as to shut out the workings of Satan. It will be once more man's hour, and the power of darkness. But there will be a preparation for what is coming.

It may be well to say that I do not think the moment of the removal of the church will be that of the instant manifestation of the lawless one. Though generally true, I believe there will be an interval between the two;

and it is especially in this interval—the early days after the Lord has taken His own to be with Himself—that He touches the hearts of not a few before the evil one has yet fully brought out his plans. There will be, in fact, a new testimony, suited of course to that time; and there will be extraordinary witnesses raised up and preserved, so that the devil may not be able to put them down till their hour is come. You see the two witnesses in Revelation xi. They are sustained of God to the hurt of their enemies. After an allotted time they fall, but not till their work is done. Do you suppose that the work is vain? Do you imagine that no souls will receive the testimony of the two witnesses? I cannot agree with you. The Lord will use and apply it—will surely bring individuals to the knowledge of Himself,—feebly, perhaps, but suitably to the work He is going to accomplish. And thus, when the Lord Jesus returns in His glory—when it is not only His presence, but the manifestation of His presence,—then every eye shall see Him, and not only those that look for Him. These will have been caught up already; but when He appears with the clouds of heaven, and His saints with Him, then every eye shall see Him; and He will destroy the lawless one. He will cast the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire. There will be a judgment of the living or quick that must fall according to divine wisdom on man. There will be a gathering of the nations to be judged in their natural bodies and circumstances (I am not speaking of the final judgment of the dead raised up), and the millenium will take its course after all the process of judging those caught in open rebellion has been finished.

This is the general scheme of the word of God on this solemn topic.

I shall not add more to-day, hoping, if the Lord will, on the appointed day, to address such as may be here on the elders in heaven. I shall hope then to give some proofs as to the intermediate state of things, which I could hardly be expected to do fully in a single discourse.

THE COMING AND THE DAY OF THE LORD VIEWED MORALLY.

2 THESS. II. 1, 2.

My object to-night is not so much to prove the certainty of the Lord's return as to endeavour to set forth its value, and to show how it connects itself with all that is most precious morally in God Himself, and therefore, like all other truths, bound up with Christ. I therefore shall not so much speak to souls that have never heard—or have not in some measure received—the general testimony of scripture to the coming of the Lord Jesus, as take a somewhat comprehensive glance, assuming that those who are now present have already to a certain extent made this truth their own.

One difficulty from which souls have suffered is this, that they confound two distinct parts of the Lord's coming. We have them both brought before us in the two verses just read. "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him." Here it is scarcely possible to avoid some perception of the object of the Spirit of God in what He is applying to the brethren. He beseeches the brethren by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and their re-union with Him on high, that "ye be not soon shaken in mind." It is clear that the Holy Ghost used the presence of Christ and its effect

in gathering the saints to Him as a motive of comfort and stay to their souls in the face of agitating rumours. They were therefore not to be "soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is present" (or "come").

It seems superfluous to dwell particularly on what has been often done before. I need not now stop to prove that the reading is the day of "the Lord" rather than "Christ," or that the version is not "at hand," but "present," or actually arrived. I am entitled to both points as already ruled. No doubt this may be somewhat startling to those who have not examined the subject fully, but it is now conceded by competent scholars everywhere; even the last point is generally admitted by persons who were themselves originally and strongly opposed. It is simply a question in fact, first, of the actual title that the Spirit of God wrote, and next of our giving the last word its true and regular force. No critic of weight any longer hesitates to receive *κυρίου* for the vulgar *Χριστοῦ*. The meaning of *ἐνέστηκεν* has been more questioned. Certain however it is that what is translated here being "at hand" never means this in scripture, if indeed it ever means so anywhere else; but it is sufficient for my purpose to say that the Spirit of God never employs it in that sense. When He means "at hand," He uses a different expression.

The report spread was that the well-known day of trouble was already come. Of course those who spread abroad such a rumour must have taken the day of the Lord in some spiritual way, because it was very evident that the world at large abode much as before,

and that judgment-day in a literal sense was not as yet. There were trials, persecutions, and troubles of various kinds at that time, which were taken hold of in order to make out that the day of the Lord in some sort was already arrived. Nor is this by any means an uncommon thing in the history of souls or of Christendom. There have been several epochs before in the world when people pretended that the last day was come. And we may find something that may help you in this point of view in the second Epistle to Timothy, where we learn those were not wanting who propagated the notion that the resurrection was past already. Clearly they must have taken the resurrection in some figurative way to set up such a pretension. But, understand it as they might, their doctrine is certain. However we may explain, or try to explain, the character and grounds of the errors which the Spirit of God guards against in both passages, we must own the fact and the plain meaning of the words. The false teachers in the one place insisted that the day of the Lord was arrived, and in the other they said that the resurrection was already past, or had actually come. The truth is that neither one nor other could be till Christ Himself had come; and this is what the Spirit of God pre-supposes more particularly in the very verse before. "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is present." Do not believe that it is set in. Do you not know that the Lord Jesus is coming to gather you to Himself first?

Now the Thessalonian saints were feebly aware

of this, not at all clear as to it. They had been lately led to expect that the day of the Lord might somehow fall with its troubles before the Lord Jesus came—the blessed object of hope for the believer. That is, they did not know the right mutual relation between the day of the Lord and the coming of the Lord. They had seen in the Old Testament, where the day of Jehovah is frequently spoken of, that a special time of disaster on any nation is called “the day of the LORD,” as for instance with Egypt, or Babylon. So here it would appear from the first Epistle to the Thessalonians that the believers were going through considerable trouble; for the apostle was afraid that Satan might tempt them because of their tribulation. The enemy did take advantage of this by a misuse of the Old Testament, and false teachers pretended that the day of terror and trial, of clouds and darkness, was already come. No, says the apostle, we beseech you by the coming of our Lord Jesus, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not troubled by anything of the sort. That day is not come.

These false teachers, it is plain from what follows, were not merely deceived; some at least were deceivers. This is certain from the fact that they pretended to have a letter written by the apostle Paul to the effect that the day of the Lord was actually come. There are, or have been, Christians who apply this to the first epistle. They are mistaken. The language will not bear a reference to that epistle. If the apostle had meant his first epistle, he would have said, “By letter from us,” or “by our letter.” He on the contrary speaks after another sort, “by letter *as* from us;” that is, “by letter purporting to be through us.” “*As* from

us" does not mean that it really was, but that they said it was. In short, therefore, it was not a misunderstanding of the inspired Epistle to the Thessalonians, though they may have sought to extract some support from it; but what the apostle here warns against is, that they had gone so far as to present a pretended letter from the apostle to the effect that the day of the Lord was already come.

Then in the remaining part of the chapter, from the third verse, the apostle gives them another ground against this thought. In short, he says that the day of the Lord cannot come until there is the falling away or the apostasy, and the man of sin is revealed—two great stages of evil which must be fulfilled before the day of the Lord comes. For this there is a very simple reason. The day of the Lord supposes divine judgment executed on an evil state of things on the earth. In the Old Testament we find it also in a preparatory or providential way; but the New Testament only speaks of it in its complete form, when our Lord Jesus will Himself be the executor of that judgment. Now there was the point in which these deceivers were mistaken (for very possibly they were deceived while at the same time they were deceivers): the New Testament only points to the day of the Lord in its final and full sense. The attempts, therefore, to apply the scriptures of the New Testament in a preparatory or providential way were altogether erroneous. That day could not come, he says, "except there come the falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." Then he developes the dreadful character of the man of sin, and explains that the ripe and manifest evil which is to be judged when our Lord Jesus is revealed from

heaven in flaming fire is to be the result of what was already secretly at work. He says "the mystery of iniquity" (or lawlessness) "doth already work; only there is one who now letteth" (or hindereth) "until he be taken out of the way, and then shall the lawless one be revealed." I prefer the word "lawlessness" instead of "iniquity" in verse 7, and "lawless one" instead of "wicked" in verse 8, because the apostle means not so much the general evil that is in the world as a very special consummation both of the principle and of the practice of lawlessness, and then of a certain lawless personage that is singled out in the scripture as the object of divine judgment at the close.

Thus it is seen we have the connexion of the mystery or secret of lawlessness which was already at work with that result. It was going on when the apostle wrote; and the hidden leaven of evil, the mystery of lawlessness, will continue to work until it issues in this person, the lawless one, when it will be no longer secret but an open manifestation, defying God and trampling on all truth in the world—a complete abandonment of all revelation, and a rising up in personal pride and antagonism against the Lord Himself. This is the lawless one or the Antichrist of St. John. I do not mean antichrists, but *the* Antichrist who is spoken of as the great object of divine dealing when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven. So he says here, "Then shall that lawless one be revealed whom the Lord Jesus"—for so it is written, the word "Jesus" having dropped out of the common Bible, "whom the Lord Jesus"—"shall consume by the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness" (or rather shining forth, *ἐκφανεία*) "of his coming."

Now I have read this because it makes plain a very important point for those who have not seen it before. "The coming" of the Lord Jesus is the general expression; "the day" of the Lord is a particular part of it. When the Lord is revealed in His "day," it is still His "coming;" but the Lord might come for purposes of grace before the arrival of what scripture calls His day, for this simple reason, that the day, as can be shown from various scriptures, always involves two things—manifestation and (if it be the world that is in question) judgment, which the coming of the Lord Jesus does not. The day of the Lord implies manifestation and judgment; but this is not all the Lord will do. The coming of the Lord Jesus therefore is what we may call the generic term; it is the broader and more general form of expressing the great truth; whereas the day of the Lord in the full sense is that particular phase of His presence in which He deals with what is opposed to God, and displays Him righteously before man. Thus in verse 8 it is the day, though not expressly so designated; but the shining forth of His presence is clearly judicial, as the context shows, and manifest by the force of the phrase itself, and hence means the day of the Lord. So does the presence or coming of "the Son of man," as in Matt. xxiv., where the phrase conjoined, being the *παρουσία* of the Lord as judge, modifies the sense and necessarily implies that day.

It is too often assumed that the coming of our Lord and His day are all one and the same thing; but where this is done, it is impossible to understand the proper force of scripture. Take this place, where the apostle beseeches them by the one that they be not troubled

about the other. How could he beseech them by any thing that they should not be disturbed by the same thing? Where the sense or propriety of this? But we can perfectly understand that the day of the Lord is to be the time when evil must be put down, when there is beyond measure trouble and confusion among men, when solemn judgments press on and the Lord's hand is stretched out till the result is complete, that it is associated with images of human terror, and indeed with reality of divine judgment executed on the earth. The saints then are by the apostle besought, by that bright hope of Christ's presence which was full of comfort and blessedness to themselves, not to be troubled about the tremendous intervention of the Lord in His day, which was full of anxiety and trouble to those settled down in the earth.

Nor does this of course depend on a single particular scripture. I shall draw your attention to several parts of the word of God, and then show, as I trust, the immense moral principles of truth that are underneath this difference, so as to make it evident that we have no mere verbal distinction, but real and grave truths, which flow out of God's own nature and run through His word.

Here, however, it is easy to point out in the same passage the evident difference, and even contrast, between the two things. Before leaving the passage, you will observe that the latter part of verse 8 speaks of "the brightness of his coming." It is the very same word that is rendered elsewhere "the appearing," and hence would here mean "the appearing of his coming." If His coming always implied brightness or appearing, there would be no particular point, but tautology rather,

in saying "the appearing of his coming." If on the other hand the coming of the Lord does not necessarily or of itself imply manifestation, then it would require "the appearing of his coming" to define that the Lord will then be made manifest to the world. And this I believe to be the simple truth.

Hence, therefore, we might affirm that it would not be correct to say "by the appearing (or the day) of the Lord and our gathering together then." On the other hand to say, "whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with *his coming*," would scarcely be according to the exactitude of scripture. In order to give precision to the thought, the Spirit of God was pleased to say that He shall destroy him with "the appearing of his coming." This no doubt is substantially the same thing as "the day of the Lord;" that is, it is not merely His coming, but His coming made manifest; it is the coming or presence of the Son of man when every eye shall see Him. Now, if He always be manifest when He comes, where would be the reason for saying "the appearing of his coming?" but if He can come and accomplish very important objects by His presence without appearing, then we can understand that it is necessary where there is also manifestation to say so.

This, then, I believe is what we really ought to gather from the expression of the Holy Spirit here. In short, in the first verse the Spirit of God speaks of His coming without a word about the appearing. In the eighth verse He speaks about not the coming only but the appearing—the manifestation of His coming. Now observe the difference. When the coming alone is spoken of, what is the connexion? What the revealed

effect of His coming? "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of the Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto him." The effect of the Lord's coming or presence (for such is the strict meaning of *παρουσία*), is that the saints are gathered to be with the Lord. Whether found sleeping or awake—in other words, whether alive or dead—the saints are gathered to be with Christ. "We beseech you by the coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering unto him." The moment the Lord Jesus comes—not when He appears, but when He comes and instead of being absent is present—the saints at once are assembled to be with Him above. But the lawless one is not judged until the Lord not merely comes but appears. Therefore it is said, "whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the appearance of his coming." The manifested presence of the Lord is appointed and said in the word to deal with the adversary.

Hence therefore the coming of the Lord, and the appearing of His coming, or His day, are two distinct facts. He can come and receive His saints, and afterwards He will appear and put down the adversary. Perhaps the objection might be raised, and it is well to meet it at once, "But why should He not come and deal with the adversary first, and then gather the saints to Himself?" The answer is best met by the question, What saith the scripture? On such matters we can have no light but the Bible. But it would seem that this is in part the error the apostle combats. The false teachers were alarming the saints with the notion that the day of the Lord was already come. I grant you that they could only in this have meant the day in a kind of figurative way, perhaps believing that the day

ultimately would be still more tremendous. Some, however, use figures to destroy realities. Otherwise if only a figurative day of the Lord filled them with trouble, surely the final day of the Lord would be still more tremendous if it could happen without their being gathered to the Lord first. Certain it is that by their sense of "the day of the Lord" before His presence to gather them to be with Him, they were shaken in mind and troubled: how much more if they had looked for that day in all its force with the saints left on the earth when the Lord will crush this kingdom and humble that, destroying the beast, the false prophet, as well as households, with his saints mixed up in so fearful a hurly-burly of this world! I need not say how unlike all this would be to the ways of the Lord with those whom He loves.

But we do not need to come to mere inferences. To tell you the truth, I always distrust any doctrine on any subject that depends on mere illative reasoning. If you cannot give me scripture for what you say, do not say it; and I would advise you, if I may so do, to beware of it yourselves. How can anything be of faith that is merely inferential or a development? You ought to have scripture; and these are times when we cannot afford to have anything less than the plain word of God. God, who is ever considerate of the simple, and graciously thinks of the wants of souls that do not know much, does give His revealed mind for whatever is to be believed, and therefore it is not a mere theory we want—a consequence drawn from something else—perhaps a theory built upon theory. Nothing of the sort is here, but the plain word of God for the believer.

In another Epistle the apostle lays it down as a doctrine bound up with most important consequences, that "when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory." This is the more important as he is contrasting two different states of Christ. He says that "our life is hid with Christ in God." Christ is now hidden. So long as He is thus, our life too is hidden. "When Christ who is our life shall appear," in contrast with being hidden, "then we shall also appear." If you give this full force, it would be thus: "When Christ who is our life shall be manifested" (which is really the full and proper word), "then shall we also" (then, not before, and not after, but at that time) "be manifested with him in glory." It is seen at once that the moment of the Lord's appearing is the moment of the church's appearing along with Him. The Lord, therefore, cannot appear a second before the glorified saints appear along with Him. When the Lord is manifested, the saints are so also, being already with Him. And this entirely agrees with the plain statement of symbolic scripture, where we have the times and the seasons more fully than anywhere else in the New Testament. If there is any book in the apostolic writings where we should expect to have prophetic measures, it is certainly in the Revelation. Now in that chain of predictions—the most important book of prophecy for the Christian—the day of the Lord of course has its place. We find the full statement of the Lord's appearing from heaven in judgment. It is given in detail in Revelation xix. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes

were as a flame of fire," and so on. In verse 14 we read, "And the armies which were in the heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Now there it is most evident that when the heavens open for the appearing in glory, they open not merely for Christ, but for those that are Christ's. "The armies which were in heaven" (the heavenly saints are no longer on the earth) "followed him on white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean." I grant you that this retinue and dress might be supposed to be angelic; and it is not denied that angels follow the Lord. But it is plain that those who are described here are not angels, for this simple reason, that they are said to be "clothed in fine linen, white and clean;" and in the very same chapter (verse 8) the fine linen is said to be "the righteousness of saints"—not of angels. We know nothing at all about the righteousness of angels. They are never in ~~the~~ ~~scripture~~ spoken of as righteous. They are without sin, being sustained as in their original integrity and purity; but this is not the meaning of righteousness.

Consistency with our relationship is ever spoken of, as far as the creature is concerned, as either conferred by the Lord Jesus Christ, or as the fruit of the Holy Spirit's practical action in the soul. Righteousness therefore may be either that which we are accounted in Christ—what is commonly called imputed righteousness—when by faith the believer though unrighteous in himself is accounted righteous in the Lord, which is perfectly true, and a very important truth; or, on the other hand, it is that which the Spirit of God exercises us in practically day by day. I have not the slightest doubt that in this case the reference is to the latter.

"The fine linen is the righteousness of saints." For this reason the word really means here "righteousnesses." It is a different form of word, and plural. If it were a question of what we are made in Christ, neither would be the case. The righteousness which we are made in Christ is the same righteousness for every one that is made it. As in sin, so in righteousness—there is "no difference." Here John is speaking about the righteousnesses of each saint, and the more as we find the saints spoken of as a whole. "Righteousnesses" is a phrase impossible to apply to what we are made in Christ; because, if this were the case, the result would be, one made one measure and another made another measure, which would be inconsistent with the revealed doctrine of divine righteousness. But when we come to look at the practical display of righteousness, of course there are differences. The exact meaning of the word is "righteousnesses of the saints," as in any accurate translation by such as profess to give the precise sense you will find it to be what I am here stating; for we are not now entering on disputed points. There are proper seasons for discussing delicate shades of meaning; but I am speaking now of what is commonly allowed by all fair enquirers, whatever their system may be.

This then seems a very decisive scripture. For thus the Lord Jesus, followed by the risen saints, comes from heaven for the execution of judgment on earth. It is the day of the Lord, the brightness or appearing of His coming when He destroys the lawless one. But when He so comes He is not alone. Others beyond angels are with Him—faithful, called, and chosen. (Rev. xvii. 14.) He is followed by the armies that are in heaven. Of course these saintly hosts must have been caught up

there before. The scene does not suit the separate spirits of the saints. They are never so described. They would not be seen mounted on white horses any more than on thrones: both, I grant, symbols of course; but not of saints in the separate state. They are saints already glorified. In short therefore we learn another fact—not only that the Lord Jesus comes and receives the saints, but that He takes them up to heaven; so that when the wickedness of the world completely develops, which may follow the translation in a very short time, then the heaven opens, and the Lord comes with the glorified saints attending Him. Any one who is acquainted with the structure of the book of Revelation will see that what I am now stating is only a reproduction of what the Spirit of God clearly reveals there.

For, only to say a few words more, what is it we find in the book? I should say this. First of all are the seven churches,—a complete view of the church state. After this we have churches no more. When the last of these Apocalyptic assemblies has been brought before us—the seven churches of Asia, though as I believe looking out prophetically—there is not a word more about churches on the earth. The true way of accounting for the fact so pictured here is, that the Lord comes and takes away those who are now in a church condition, waiting for Him according to His promise. For how is that state to close otherwise? It was not man that began the church at Pentecost, it was God; and He only will put an end to that condition; and this He will do by receiving to the Lord Jesus those that belong to Him, and are waiting for Him. Accordingly heaven is opened immediately after, or at any rate a door is opened in heaven, and the prophet sees a body never

before seen in heaven—the twenty-four elders. Angels had been seen, seraphim and cherubim, the Son of man, and even the Ancient of days; but who had ever heard of elders in heaven before? How came they there? They were the saints caught up to be with the Lord. He had taken them to Himself on high. And this is entirely confirmed by the fact, that the elders are seen to be crowned and throned. As they are invested with royal dignity, they further have vials full of odours or incense. Thus they are both kings and priests. There can be no doubt therefore that these elders are not angels but glorified saints. For there is another thing to take notice of; that is, they are complete, they are twenty-four. Now that number most evidently answers to the courses of priesthood—the only twenty-four that I am aware of which is given in scripture. They are the heads of the priesthood; for afterwards we know there were others made priests, but there were no more heads of the priesthood. They were the chief priests, so to speak, of the heavenly hierarchy. These are no other, in my judgment, than the Old Testament and the New Testament saints caught up at the coming of the Lord Jesus to be with Himself. Afterwards others are seen in the vision put to death, martyrs at the end of the age during the time of unparalleled trouble, who become not elders but priests, not chiefs, if one may so speak, but simply priests. How blessed to be so! Yet they do not arrive at the dignity of the twenty-four. Thus the elders have a very special place; and accordingly there is never an addition to their number. Others may be called and blessed; but the elders remain twenty-four as before from beginning to end. It confirms this to see that from chap. xix., to which I have already

referred, we do not hear a word more about the elders. They disappear. Why? Because the Lord Jesus will have come from heaven, whither He will have taken them up, and when afterwards spoken of, it is as His armies or hosts. Then comes the question of making war on a guilty world. Elders do not make war; but hosts do. Consequently the figure of the elders is dropped, and that of armies is taken up. There can be no solution, it appears to me, of the case other than this—at least I am not aware of any other that has even an appearance of meeting the conditions of the problem.

Further, all this is precisely in accordance with what we have seen to be the doctrine of the Apostle Paul. He urges on the saints to be always expecting the coming of the Lord. He teaches them that, while the Lord is hidden, they too must be; that when the Lord is manifested, they shall be manifested along with Him in glory. Consequently the coming of the Lord cannot at first be manifest, because if the Lord Jesus appeared when He came to receive the saints, He would appear in heaven and they would be still on the earth: He would be appearing in glory without the saints; whereas the doctrine of scripture is that when the Lord shall be manifested, they shall be manifested along with Him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.)

Thus, putting together what we have seen, nothing can be more simple. He will come again. Instead of being absent, He comes and the saints at once rise to meet Him in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. He takes them to heaven, to the presence of the Father. Afterwards the right moment comes for the Lord Jesus to appear; and when He appears, they

appear along with Him in glory. Thus you see these various statements of scripture perfectly harmonize when the two different steps or stages of the Lord's coming are understood; whereas when they are not taken account of, many and serious difficulties rise up; one part of the word does not agree with another, which is always the effect wherever we have not before us the full and simple truth of God. Whenever you have only part of the truth, still more if you accredit a mistake, there is some other portion that will not agree. When you have received the truth in simplicity, then the different parts which seemed disconnected and opposed all fall into their proper places. When it is seen accordingly that the coming of the Lord first is brought before us gathering the saints to be with Him, and then that He not only comes but appears in glory, and the saints follow Him out of heaven and appear in glory too, all is made plain.

Further, the interval between the coming of the Lord and the appearing of His coming is the time that Satan busily employs to bring forward his great plot of the apostasy and the man of sin. It is the time when the mystery of lawlessness ceases to be a mystery, when the lawlessness that was working secretly issues up into its full development and the lawless one shall be revealed; and the revolt is so direct and complete that God, as it were, acts on the impossibility of tolerating it more. The Lord Jesus, therefore, as the Word of God then as ever, comes forth and judges this excessive and destructive rebellion against God where men boast most here below. But then His own glorified saints are with Him; and this, it will be seen, puts the whole case in a clear light as to the scriptures. Nor is this the only

result. There is another remark or two to be made which will be found of importance.

We know that in God Himself there are two qualities that especially display themselves in dealing with His people. The first is His grace, the second His righteousness. In the cross of Christ the grace of God and the righteousness of God meet in perfect concord and join in the blessing of the believer. So in our daily walk with God, who does not find that His grace brings us into a certain position of blessing where, if we fail, the Lord has a righteous government in which He chastises us? This is the reason why you may find such an one so much more troubled, so much more in sorrow, affliction, and humiliation, because he is a child of God, if he have failed as a servant of God and grieved the Spirit. The Lord does not abandon His love—His grace abides, as does its fruit also. Grace has brought that soul to God out of the world. Does God repent of His grace because the soul needs to repent, as having fallen into what is evil, grievous, and humbling? Not so. Does God then say, As he is my child, I pass all over? No, He never passes over the faults of the Christian. There is where we learn the faithful yet holy provision of His love. His grace shall never be given up. On the other hand, His righteous government must always take its way. Hence it was with the Corinthians, who really were believers, as the apostle was told when he went to the city—that city of corruption and vileness. The Lord had much people there; though if there was a spot in the world where the holy apostle might have been afraid to put his foot and to live, it was Corinth. It was notoriously the vilest of the vile. But the Lord had much people there. At

Athens He had comparatively few people. But at Corinth the apostle had learnt what he could not have gathered otherwise, and therefore went on; and even when many of them went sadly astray, falling into grievous disorder and sin, he did not give up his confidence that the Lord owned them as His people. But he told them, and told them in the most solemn manner, that if they did not judge themselves, they would be judged of the Lord; and that, when they were judged, they were chastened of Him that they should not be condemned with the world. For with the Lord sin must be judged; sin can never be tolerated where He is named. If we, therefore, through carelessness allow sin, one of two things is evident. If we have no portion in Christ, we must ourselves be judged for it everlastingly; and, if so, how can we be but lost? But if the grace of God has really brought us to Himself by Jesus Christ our Lord, He deals with us, sends affliction on us, and perhaps even takes away natural life (1 John v.), that we should not be condemned with the world. Thus the righteous government of God must take its course and do its work; and this no less in mercy to us than in vindication of His own glory.

As this is true even in our ordinary walk, as these two principles are most clearly united in the cross, are they absent from the coming of the Lord? Not so. Grace or righteousness is always found. How then can they be applied to the future according to God? As the coming of the Lord consists of the two parts already distinguished, it will be found on examination that, where scripture simply speaks of the coming of the Lord as such without any reference to manifestation or judgment, it is invariably the answer to the grace of

God. And this may be seen readily by the simplest believer. For, let me ask, why does the Lord Jesus come again? and why are the saints gathered up to be with Him above? Because of His absolute grace. If it were not for grace, do you suppose that the Lord Jesus would leave the glory of heaven and the presence of His Father? Certainly not. And if the Lord Jesus could leave that glory to come, how could He gather up such as you and me to be with Him at once? How could we be taken into the presence of God in light and blessedness, in peace and joy and rest for ever? From no other principle than His grace. It is grace and nothing but grace that can adequately account for the coming of the Lord for us and our gathering to be with Him. Therefore we understand that this is the richest and fullest motive of comfort that the apostle Paul could bring to bear on the souls of the saints to dispel the injurious notions which the instruments of Satan were spreading.

For let me explain further, that there are two ways, in one or other of which you will find heterodoxy to indulge, and you may know teachers to be false by their indulgence in them. One of these ways of error is the effort to give a spurious, groundless comfort to those who rather need warning and conviction. The other feature of false doctrine is, that it seeks to rob of comfort those whom God fills with peace and joy in believing. In short, false teachers either strive to comfort those that are of the world as such while they still remain worldly, and are really unbelievers and unquickened by the Spirit of God; or, on the other hand, they endeavour to alarm and shake the confidence of those that have unfeigned faith in the Lord Jesus. It is for

you to make the application; but to you it will soon appear, unless I am greatly mistaken, and the more it is examined with the fuller evidence, that into one or other of these two ditches false teachers habitually fall. Thus there never is the distinctness of revealed truth; there never is the sense of the authority of the Lord over the soul; there is never confidence in God for eternal life. Uncertainty Godward there is, and this on principle, which makes it so mischievous. There is the endeavour that, on the one hand, the believer should not be confident, happy, or thoroughly at rest in the Lord, which is surely of the devil. On the other hand, there is the endeavour that the worldly person should not be too much cast down, or really alarmed about his soul. "We must have charity. You do not know but that the Lord is dealing with that soul. Perhaps, after all, he may be a Christian: how can you tell? Be not presumptuous in believing yourself or in doubting him." Now all such thoughts flow from the same kind of deceivers as the apostle Paul was dealing with in his day; and the truth of God is clean contrary to the ways of the enemy in both respects.

Applying this to the present subject, we think of the believers at Thessalonica: What was the way of the Holy Ghost with them? To keep their minds bright, fervent, and happy in the constant expectation of the Lord Jesus. You cannot be too happy in Christ; you cannot too much confide in the truth and grace of God. You may be too confident in yourself; and there is the great and frequent mistake. You may be careless in your ways, but this you do not owe to Jesus. On the contrary, because you are a Christian, your heart should be exercised every day, whether you are growing in the

Lord, whether you are advancing in the knowledge of Him, whether you are serving and glorifying Him according to what you know to-day, not excusing failure according to what was not known yesterday. We must not allow ignorance in the past to hinder us in the present. Our responsibility is always according to what the Lord has shewn in our souls now. These Thessalonian believers then were assailed by false teachers whose great object was to take them away from their stable ground of comfort and rest in the grace of God, and to fill them with alarm because of the terrible day of trouble and judgment that is coming upon the earth, insisting that in some sort or measure it had already begun. "Not at all," says the apostle Paul, "you hold fast your bright hope. Do you not know that the Lord Jesus is coming Himself for you, and that then you are going to be gathered up to Him? Do not be troubled by all this talk about the day of the Lord. You are going to be with Christ. Granted that His day is to come; but it cannot come till the worst evil is fully ripe." The object of the day of the Lord is not the saints at all, but to judge the evil that is in the world, the lawlessness which is already at work secretly, and which is going to issue in the most open and appalling opposition to God. When that development has reached its height, then the day of the Lord will come upon it, the brightness or appearing of His coming.

Thus we see how this at once restores the balance of truth. The "coming" of the Lord Jesus is the display of perfect grace. The "day" of the Lord is the execution of righteousness; it is the dealing of the Lord with what is contrary to Himself. And I add, further, it is not merely that the world will be the object of

righteous dealing, but even the saints themselves; and for this reason: not that they will be judged like the world—if they were, they must be lost too; but the Lord gives scope for His righteous ways, while at the same time He does not mix up the believer and the unbeliever in judgment. The believer shall not come into judgment. It is not merely that he shall not come into condemnation, but that he does not come into judgment, such is the express teaching of the Lord Jesus in John v. How then does the Lord reconcile all this? Perfectly. When the believers are caught up to be with Christ, they will be manifested before His judgment seat; they will give to the Lord an account of everything done by the body. The Lord accordingly will vindicate His own ways with them, and they will appreciate all His dealings as perfectly as they will judge their own. Hence, therefore, when the Lord Jesus appears in glory, the saints that are already with Him—the glorified saints—will be displayed according to either their service rendered or their faithfulness under trial. There will be different positions in glory. And on what does difference of position depend? Upon the grace of God? Not so. If it were the grace of God, all would be in the same position. It is nothing but the absolute grace of God that could save a single soul; it is precisely the same grace of God that saves you and the apostle. There is no difference. If there could be a shade of difference in the grace, you could not get to heaven at all. The fact is there is only One who could bring you there, and that is Christ; but even Christ Himself—with reverence be it spoken—even the Saviour could not bring you there worthily of God, except by redemption. It is not the spotlessness and

the perfectness of Christ—it is not Christ even perfect in all His ways here below—that brings you to heaven, though you cannot get there without all; but it is Christ suffering for you, “the just for the unjust,” that brings you to God; and He suffered in the fullest way for every soul that is brought to God. In fact, it is the very same suffering of Christ on the cross that is applied to every soul that needs it.

Thus, then, we see that it is precisely the same grace displayed in and by the Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is only by His suffering as the crucified Christ that souls are brought to God. But when brought to God, then the Lord takes account of every difference. Certainly neither you nor I will have the same place in glory as the apostle Paul. For Christians in general have a sort of feeling—some may be a little more confused than others, but generally they have a just feeling—that there will be differences: only sometimes they confound things together, and often do not well distinguish between the grace that brings to God and His righteous government that arranges among those brought to God according to a just estimate of their service and suffering.

Hence, too, it is that failure will appear then. I do not at all mean by this that any one in the presence of God will not be thoroughly happy. I am persuaded that in heaven, and in the kingdom too, there will be perfect happiness for every soul that is brought to God; only the Lord will know how to reconcile the two things. The Lord will know how to maintain every glorified one in perfect enjoyment of Him, and at the same time to display each according to his faithfulness or his lack of it. All this, doubtless, will be ordered according to the unfailing righteousness of the Lord in the kingdom;

only we must remember that we shall feel them perfectly according to God. We shall delight in another's having a better place than ourselves. There will be no envy, nor jealousy whatever. All will thoroughly overflow with divine joy, and each bow in submission, delighting in it, to the will of the Lord.

This seems to connect itself very manifestly with the great subject of which I am treating. All goes to shew that the difference between the coming of the Lord and the day of the Lord is not in the least arbitrary, but necessary if our future is to reflect the ways and nature of God. Who can say that it merely depends on a text here or a word there, though this would be quite enough for a believing soul that knows no more? Nor do I put the smallest slight on the man—on the contrary, I admire him—who, though he does not understand why it is, cleaves simply to scripture. This is quite right. Every one has not the same spiritual intelligence. Few can clearly explain why things are as they are in scripture: to do so supposes a certain spiritual maturity. But understanding or not understanding, hold fast what God reveals. Nevertheless it is no small comfort to the heart when, having received truth as a simple matter of faith, we have a spiritual understanding of it given to us by the Spirit of God.

I trust that what has been advanced will help souls in this way; indeed I am persuaded of it. They will see that the coming of the Lord, when it is named simply as such, is always associated with the display of grace, and that the day of the Lord is always associated with the display of righteousness. A few scriptures may serve to make this plain.

Let me take you first of all to the first Gospel, and

we shall find there somewhat that bears on the subject. In Matthew xxv. we have the parable of what is called "The Ten Virgins;" and there we are told that they took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. "And at midnight," while the bridegroom tarried, and they had all slumbered and slept, "there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." The foolish wanted oil: the wise had no oil to give them as they said, "lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." And what is its character morally? Is it the display of righteousness? Certainly not, but of grace. Thus it is no question at all of faithfulness being manifested to the world; it is merely the intimate privilege of being with the Bridegroom. It is not the virgins appearing with Him; for they are not so shown. It is an inner scene. They go forth to meet the Bridegroom; the Bridegroom comes; and they go in with Him to the marriage.

It may interest some to know that the parable really closes with the words, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour." The words "*wherein the Son of man cometh*" are an unauthorized addition to the parable. The words were no doubt put in because they occurred elsewhere in the discourse; but it is perfectly well known to those acquainted with these matters that the clause has no sufficient title to be there. Be it noted that there is not a word about the Son of man in the parable unless there. A spiritual mind would see that "Son of man" does not agree with the tone of the

parable. The Lord is presented not as Son of man, in which capacity judgment is given to Him, but as Bridegroom. What has a bridegroom to do with judgment? It is plain that the whole scope of the passage is a certain scene of joy and blessedness into which the Lord will introduce those that wait for Him. He has called them from this world to wait for Himself; but while He tarries all prove unfaithful. The Lord, however, in His love causes a warning to go forth in time to them all; but those that had not the oil of the Spirit, the unction from the Holy One, lost themselves in vainly seeking it, and in fact were shut out. Those who had the unction were ready, and went in to the marriage. It is clearly Christians as distinct from those who were merely nominal professors; for if they had been true believers, they would not have wanted the oil. Can we rightly think of a Christian that has not the Holy Ghost? Is it not the distinctive privilege of all such? It might be needless to say so, but for those who have speculated about it, and argued that the foolish ones must have had oil. Why reason thus? The scripture says, not that they had a little oil, but that they had none. The teaching is perfectly plain, and it is only when men have a troublesome theory of their own that they find these difficulties. But you say that their lamps had been burning. True, the wick burned a little while, but it did not burn long without oil. There is really no difficulty if we believe what the Lord says, that they took no oil. Thus, taking the oil as always in the language of scripture for the Spirit, they had not the Spirit. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

But in the connexion we have another view. Take

the very next parable, where we have the different servants who are weighed and approved by the Lord Jesus according to their success or not in trading with the talents given them. There we find government, righteous government, taking account of the differences among them. Accordingly we find that one has made two talents, and another five. Differences are found here, no difference on the part of the virgins. All five wise virgins, all those that had oil, go in one as much as another. There was no difference among them: when you are on the ground of grace, difference is not the point; but when you enter that of righteous government, difference instantly appears. Then, we readily observe, there are differences not only between the faithful as compared with the unfaithful, but between the faithful as compared with one another. Thus scripture is perfectly harmonious.

Without wishing to notice every passage, let us look at the Gospel of Luke. In chapter xii. 35 we read, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." What is this? Righteous government? Not in the least. It is grace and nothing else. The Lord come forth and serve us! Have we any claim to this? We! Certainly not. It is a deeper blessedness, even that of such as we, to have the Lord the Son of God serving them in the fulness of His grace. "Blessed are those

servants, then, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching."

But let us look a little farther on in the chapter at the reply of our Lord to Peter, who asked, "Speakest thou this parable to us, or even unto all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom the lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom the lord when he cometh shall find so doing." The moment you come to our "doing," you involve righteous government, which estimates conduct displayed in practical facts. Of course differences are seen there; and there the lord makes the faithful servant ruler over his household. He gives one a position of rule here, another of rule there, and these are not the same; as we find in chapter xix. of the same Gospel, one is made a ruler over five cities, another is made a ruler over ten cities, speaking now parabolically, according to the language of the Lord.

Thus the first is the ground of grace, the effect of which is that you are found watching for Christ. Here it is not what you are to be; it is Christ Himself that fills the heart. You love Him, and therefore watch for Him. You do not even consider what position you are going to be placed in, which is another thought altogether, when every man receives according to his work. Here it is simply the heart fixed on an object that is dearer to it than all others, the effect of which is that you watch for Him; you delight in the Lord Jesus; and "blessed are those servants whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." For then is the fulness of His own grace: He comes forth and serves them, as we have seen.

But if I am found faithfully doing whatever the Lord calls me to here, this is not forgotten. If you are a faithful servant, the Lord will make you an honoured ruler. If you have been faithful in a little, He will exalt you over much. Such is the order given, and such the manner of His dealing with us. But it is clear that here we are come to righteous government.

Thus we see then that these principles run through scripture, that it is not a capricious theory which first supposes a thing and then endeavours to squeeze other things into fit. Here we have what God Himself has written; here we have what does not depend on a mere word or two, but what is firmly rooted in the truth of scripture and in the moral principles of God Himself.

We come now to another scripture, to the Gospel of John. What do we find there? Righteous government? Not at all. It is not so that the coming of the Lord is ever presented—as far as I know, never—in his Gospel. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions.” What has this to do with righteous government? What claim have I to be in the Father’s house? None but what grace has given me. I have never done anything, I have never deserved anything, which would give me even the smallest plea why the Father should put me in the same house with the Son. How is it then that any could be brought into such unspeakable nearness and intimacy with the Father? Simply because of His own grace. “In my Father’s house,” says our blessed Lord, “there are many mansions.” He would not have us think that all the scene of goodness was for Him alone. “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” There is room for us as well as for Christ. “If it were

not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself." It is not to make us rulers: there is no allusion to government or its awards here. It is purely the heavenly ground of divine grace, where all other considerations vanish.

No doubt when the saints come forth from the Father's house, and are brought before the world, then comes the question of showing how they have acted and laboured, how they have endured for His sake from a Christ-rejecting world. And the Lord Jesus will put down the thoughts of the world, and will vindicate what was of Himself in His own that suffered here below; for if we suffer, we shall reign; and if we have served Him, every man will have reward according as his own work is, as the apostle Paul teaches.

But the Father's house where Christ takes us raises no question of service, nor is there the reward of suffering here. There is not a question of anything but the grace of God shown us by and with His Son. There was only One in the universe that had a right to be there, and this was the Son of God; but sovereign grace shares the place of Christ with those that deserve nothing but hell. Thus therefore what we find here is the fulness of the grace of the Son of God that will bring us into the self-same place that He enjoys Himself. This can be no other than simply grace. I am not aware that the coming of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John is ever connected with righteous government. Hence we never find here anything about the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. We never find here His sending forth His angels to purge His kingdom. In the Apocalypse we do, because there we

again enter the arena of righteous government. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." But here is nothing of the kind; His word is, "Let not your heart be troubled." On the earth *their* hearts will be troubled indeed. Thus the difference between the Gospel and the Revelation is complete.

We come now to a few scriptures in the epistles, in which I shall show that the difference is one that runs through the word of God. In the Epistle to the Romans—just to take the first that comes to hand—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." We see that the day is for the decision and reward of righteous conduct. Those that look for that day are to walk suitably to it now, so that the ground of righteousness is maintained in the exhortation quite in consonance with the day that is brought before us.

Again, in 1 Corinthians i. we read, "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Ah!" I can conceive some one saying, "there you see it is His coming." And I grant you, if it were the "coming," it would be a great difficulty; but it is not. Looking at your margin you will find it is "the revelation of our Lord." What a remarkable instance of the perfect accuracy of scripture! Further it shows that the excellent men who made our version were loose as to the Lord's coming, and never departed from it without impairing the word of God. I say, then, that the text is wrong, the margin right, and this without the smallest doubt on the matter. If it were the *coming* of the

Lord Jesus, it would be a question of grace, which would not suit the context. But we observe that he is speaking here of their being faithful in the use of their gifts, which they were certainly far from. Hence the words are, "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,"—corrected in the margin, as it should be, to "the *revelation* of our Lord Jesus Christ." Such is the real meaning of the term. It is never translated "coming," except here. It is always translated "revelation" elsewhere. There can be no doubt therefore what it ought to be. And mark what confirms it in the next verse: "Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now "the day," "the revelation," "the appearing," are all of a kindred character. They are distinguished from "the coming." Where it is simply the coming, I repeat, it is regularly the action of grace. Where it is the day, or the Lord's revelation, or the appearing of the Lord, it always brings in the ground of righteousness, and not simply of grace. Here it is plain that it is a question of faithful conduct, and accordingly "the day" and "revelation" are the true words, and not His presence or coming.

And so again in the other parts of this same epistle you will find the same principle. Thus in chapter xv. it is said, "Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's." When? In His day? Not at all. "At his coming." Why? It is the resurrection, which is not at all a question of righteousness, and could not be a reward for faithful conduct. We are not to be raised from the dead because we have been good servants, but because we are

Christ's. It is pure grace that gives us such a portion with Him. We in no way deserve it. Hence, therefore, when it is a question of the display of grace towards us, it is the coming of the Lord—"they that are Christ's at his coming."

On the other hand, where the day is spoken of, as for instance in the Epistle to the Philippians, we shall find that faithful conduct or endurance is always before the mind of the Spirit of God. He says there, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it (or carry it on) until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all." So afterwards in verse 10, "That ye may be sincere and without offence, till the *day* of Christ;" again, in the next chapter (ii. 16) he says, "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." It is a question of faithful service. The day, we see, is connected with the display of how far an apostle or any other has been faithfully serving the Lord. The coming of the Lord will not do this. The effect of it is not to display us before the world, but to take us clean out to be with Christ. When the Lord returns and appears before the world, then He will display how far we have been faithful. The day therefore is bound up with the display of faithfulness. The coming of the Lord is the taking us out of the world to be with the Lord Jesus before His Father in undeserved and infinite grace.

Nothing therefore can be more distinct, as it appears to me, than the moral truth in this matter. Hence if we examine the pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus, we shall find exactly the same thing. There the apostle

exhorts his faithful fellow-labourer, and tells him: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, till"—the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ? No; but "the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ." For the coming of our Lord will not prove how far Timothy has been faithful or not; His appearing will do so thoroughly. The appearing of the Lord Jesus therefore is the right and proper word, and none other. Still more plainly do we see in 2 Timothy the connexion between the responsibility of the servant with the Lord's appearing. Thus the apostle charges in chapter iv. 1, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, closing this part of his exhortation with his own service and its results: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." Comment here is needless, once the principle is stated and understood. The coming of the Lord as such to receive His own would be out of place in this connexion.

So again we shall find His day in the Epistle to Titus. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Now there it would seem that both are introduced. I think it is not merely the one but the other, the "blessed hope" being more

particularly the accomplishment of our joy in being caught up to be with Christ, and the "appearing of the glory" being our manifestation before the world. This therefore is a remarkably full and rich scripture, if, as I suppose, it embraces both these truths.

Again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have the day spoken of in view of responsibility. The Epistle of James presents the coming of the Lord in a rather general way. This we have seen is thoroughly correct. It is when the special side of responsibility and its results are pressed that we need and find "the day," "appearing," or some equivalent phrase for that side of the truth; as here "the judge standeth before the door."

Again 1 Peter i. 7, 13, as well as chapter v. 4, falls under the usual rule: the manifestation of Christ connects itself with the exhibition of fidelity in trial, and service general or special. And 2 Peter iii. seems to my mind as exquisitely exact as any other, though to a superficial glance the terms might seem there interchangeable. But it is not so. The scoffers of the last days say, Where is the promise of His coming? Unbelief is as sure of a stable unchanged world as of man's progress. What is the answer of faith? Not the presence of the Lord but His *day* will come as a thief in the night. If they taunt as to the Lord's coming with its bright hope, the Holy Spirit threatens them with the solemn affirmation that His day will come with a power which will dissolve, not merely the works of busy man, but the heavens and earth before it closes.

It is obvious that, in 1 John ii. 28, iii. 2, 3, the appearing or manifestation of the Lord is intended to deal with conscience.

Jude 14, again, is no more an exception than 1 Thess.

iii. 13; for His coming *with* His saints, or His presence *with* all His saints, is not His presence when He comes to receive them, but really coalesces with His manifestation or day, and hence links itself with their responsibility rather than with His pure and simple grace toward them.

But we need not now dwell more on this subject. What has been shown will set out, I trust, plainly and distinctly, and without too much heaping one scripture on another, the two lines of divine truth that meet in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, each having its own proper sphere and moral aim. The coming or the presence of the Lord is His grace towards us when it will have its full way. The same Jesus that died for us will come again and receive us unto Himself. He that is the object of our faith is no less of our hope. If He was the only One we could trust our souls to, He is the One that God would have us to be always expecting. It is due to Him: He deserves it at our hands; and our God would make none other than Christ Himself the proper, the worthy, the only, object of hope. But the same blessed Lord Jesus will take notice of all our works. There is no suffering for Him now which will not be remembered then. There is no service now that will not all be set in the light then. The day of the Lord Jesus, the day of Christ, will display the saints according to His own divine judgment of our ways.

Thus all the truth assuredly harmonizes in this great theme, and we see this when we see the two sides in their distinctness and their combination.

May our gracious God bless His own truth to His own children for Jesus' sake!

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST AND BETHESDAISM.

WE are bound to receive one another, but only, as Christ received us, to the glory of God (Rom. xv. 7). Does this mean to receive one who brings not the doctrine of Christ, or those that receive such an one to the dishonour of the Father and the Son?

The principle of welcoming every Christian, walking as such, is consistent with the resolute refusal of all who dishonour His name, whether morally, doctrinally, or by association. 1 Cor. v. is no plainer for rejecting an immoral professor, than 2 John is for refusing those who do not hold a true Christ. Their alleged good qualities ought not to accredit them; the word of God as clearly bars it, as Christ's person and work demand our subjection. To be neutral, where the truth is at stake, is to partake of the evil deeds of His adversaries.

2 John is decisive that it is not enough to be sound personally in the faith. Even a woman, the elect lady, and her children, are carefully warned by the apostle of their direct responsibility, if they received one who did not bring the doctrine of Christ. "If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into [your] house, and give him no greeting; for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (vers. 10, 11, R. V.). Thus distinctly is the principle

laid down by the Holy Ghost, that the simplest saints who countenance the confessor of a false Christ partake of his evil deeds, even without imbibing the evil doctrine. A spiritual mind would feel that, dreadful as it is to fall into such heterodoxy, in a certain sense more guilty is he who, professing the truth of Christ, consents to fellowship with one that denies it. "Now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." Neutrality in such a case is heinous sin, and this proportionate to knowledge.

Thus 2 John proves that absolute refusal of this worst evil is due to the Son of God. The evil admits of no hesitation or compromise. Had the elect lady, spite of the apostolic warning, obstinately received into her house one who brought not the truth of Christ, she must have identified herself with the deceiver and its consequences. Vain the plea that she had been a dear child of God, both in faith and walk; the written word nevertheless pronounces her a "partaker of his evil deeds;" and God's word is better than all our reasonings and all our feelings. Whatever the motive, she had knowingly disobeyed and committed herself and her house to high treason against Christ. She had more or less sanctioned that which to the last degree denied and dishonoured the Lord of glory. Hence, till she cleared herself from the sin in the sight of God and His saints, she had sunk morally into complicity with it. The better her light, the worse to behave as if she had none. To receive her in such circumstances would

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be to participate in similar wickedness, however men may ridicule it to their own foul shame. Indeed, to receive her thus would be *His* shame, because it is barefaced indifference to the affront put on His Son. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent Him."

From the first those called "Brethren" have proved that they do not make light of ecclesiastical evil, by separating from all unscriptural associations, even if Christians join therein. But they have hitherto refused to put indifference to the Christ of God in the same category with offences against the unity, or the discipline of the assembly. Party spirit on either hand may seek to class all together. But it is as unscriptural as it is unholy so to exaggerate ecclesiastical offences (of which all sects are guilty), or so to extenuate deep and damnable denial of Christ, which characterises only the worst antagonism to God. His word warrants and demands this distinction, which no sober saint used to doubt, and none would now, unless carried away by worthless theory, or by straits of false position.

The evil doctrine against Christ, which has given us most trouble for nearly fifty years, is that, apart from imputation or vicarious suffering, Christ came as a man and an Israelite into a condition of distance and inflictions from God, in which "He was made experimentally to prove the reality of that condition in which others, but more especially Israel, had sunk themselves, by their disobedience

to God's holy law, a condition out of which He was able to extricate Himself, and from which He proved that He could extricate Himself by His own perfect obedience" (B. W. Newton's "Remarks on the sufferings" &c., p. 12). "And Jesus, as man, was associated with this place of distance in which man in the flesh was, and He had, through obedience, to find His way to that point where God could meet Him as having finished His appointed work—glorify Him, and set Him at His own right hand, in the heavenly places; and that point was death—death on the cross—death under the wrath of God" (ib. pp. 31, 32). "He was exposed, for example, because of His relation to Adam, to that sentence of death, that had been pronounced on the whole family of man" (B. W. N.'s "Observations," &c., p. 9). "The mission of John must be regarded as an all-important era, not only in the life of the Lord Jesus, &c. . . . Indeed, unless grace be the same as law, and destruction the same as salvation, the infinite importance of that era cannot be denied" (ib. pp. 10, 11). "Moreover, the exercises of soul which His elect in their unconverted state ought to have, and which they would have, if it were possible for them to know and feel every thing rightly according to God—such exercises, yet without sin, Jesus had" (ib. p. 26). "The anointing of the Spirit would never have come on Him at Jordan, unless He had been fore-ordained, and certainly known as the victim to be slain at Calvary" (ib. p. 32).

It is true that, when this deadly poison was

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analysed, and the godly stood aghast, Mr. N. printed an "Acknowledgment of Error" in applying Rom. v. 19 (first clause) to Christ. But this did not satisfy even his most trusted associates, who owned solemnly in print that it was an elaborate system, permeating their views of Scripture generally, and quite as fatal as any one had charged on them. One, indeed, warned that souls resting on what they had taught for years could not be saved. For Christ was thereby made by birth to be in man's distance from God, and especially in Israel's, by a broken law! obnoxious, therefore, to the two-fold penalties, not vicariously, but by association as one of them!! But He extricated Himself by obedience, faith, and prayer, out of some of those inflictions by which He was threatened, passing by baptism into grace—from Sinai to Zion! But the exercises which the elect when unconverted ought to have (!) if possible, were His!! Yet He had, notwithstanding, to find His way to a point where God could meet Him—death under God's wrath! If this be not a systematic and complete overthrow of "the teaching of Christ" in Scripture, words are meaningless. No heretic more thoroughly or subtly debased Christ; some, like Irving, taught more truth than B. W. N. It is a denial, not a confession, of Christ coming in the flesh; which truth does not mean the bare fact, but the Divine person of Him who came in flesh. He, and He alone, born of woman might have come otherwise; but thus He was pleased, for God's glory, and the reconciliation by His death of man and all the universe heavenly and earthly, to come

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in flesh. Had Newtonism been true, Christ must have died for Himself—could not for us, for creation, or for God's own glory. Again, if He be supposed to extricate Himself by good works and ordinances, the truth is over-thrown in this way too. And if His death were still needful for Himself to be saved (error usually being incoherent), as well as to get the anointing of the Spirit, His person is denied, and all hope of saving others wholly and necessarily destroyed.

I am grieved to add that the blinded author of this fundamental heterodoxy printed "A letter on subjects connected with the Lord's Humanity;" in which, *after* the so-called "Acknowledgment of Error," he re-affirmed the principles of both the "Remarks" and the "Observations" which had horrified even his own oldest friends and most of his partisans. Arianism, &c., on the one side, and perhaps Irvingism on the other, deny the Lord's glory more openly; but does any false system more thoroughly than his make Jesus anathema? Compare 1 Cor. xii. 3.

When the meeting at Bethesda (Bristol) admitted several partisans of Mr. N. and thus occasioned a separation far and wide among "Brethren," it had been for years fully owned as enjoying inter-communion. Hence, there is no honesty in comparing that meeting with individuals coming from the national body or from dissent. How far Bethesda really coalesced, it may be hard to say: still, it was an accomplished fact, and no question was raised till the crisis of 1848 came, when reasons

were sought to palliate the fatal deed of receiving the known followers of a convicted heretic. Now we have always accepted cases of real ignorance. But what could justify receiving persons of intelligence who came straight from his party, eulogising and circulating the very tracts which contained the anti-Christian doctrine already described? Bethesda received them in the most determined manner, driving out not a few souls, some of them among the most enlightened, spiritual, and devoted there, who refused to sanction such indifference to a blasphemy at Bristol, from which at all cost they were apart at Plymouth and elsewhere. Not satisfied with letting these persons in, ten of the leaders at Bethesda put forth a too famous document, in which they laboured to defend their refusal of investigation before receiving the incriminated. The first thing insisted on was that the Bethesda meeting should clear those who signed it: else they would minister no more in their midst! Was it surprising that the mass fell into the snare, and consented to vote the leaders right, *before* the tracts were read, or comments allowed, in the presence of the meeting? *After* the breach was consummated (!), they held meetings in which Mr. N.'s doctrine was condemned, especially by Mr. M., *as strongly almost as by any outside Bethesda.

* As much is made of J. N. D.'s visit to G. M. after these meetings, it may be stated that Mr. D.'s hopefulness was not shared by his brethren, who knew that Bethesda never owned its sin in receiving Mr. N.'s partisans, and never repented of the false principles in the Letter of the Ten (adopted by a formal vote of its constituents). Even after the seven meetings, it never so much as noticed the sin of receiving back two of the Ten

God, however, took care to test its moral value ere long, if a few were deceived at first.

Partly by this, and partly by other means, Mr. N.'s partisans were got to retire from Bethesda, expressly not waiving their claim to be there, but desiring to release the leaders from some of their difficulties. Could this yield a moment's satisfaction to a sober Christian? Bethesda was bound to clear itself openly of a sin of the gravest kind openly done: mere words would not avail, nor getting rid of souls in an underhand way. Subsequently a party was formed, a public building was taken, Mr. N. was had there, two of "the Ten" (Messrs. A. and W.) being found in their midst. The movement failed; and these two leading men, to speak of no others (after Bethesda's loud denunciation of the Newtonian blasphemy, and after these men's public association with Mr. N.) were permitted to return to Bethesda, without the smallest confession of their notorious and flagrant sin! All they owned was the wrong of leaving Bethesda; but they were not asked, nor did they give, an expression of sorrow for the wickedness of fraternising with one who still retained the main parts of his heterodoxy as to Christ. And this after the seven meetings!

Now, because we renounce all fellowship with such ways and persons, we are covered with the bitterest reproaches possible! We are taxed with

who had gone out and publicly supported Mr. N. before all Bristol! In the face of grave facts like these, what was the value of theoretic censure of the doctrine? Mr. M.'s rude repulse only compelled Mr. D. to feel as others already felt, the hollowness of Bethesda throughout. Mr. D.'s power lay in expounding the word, not in disciplinary action, as he used to own freely throughout his life.

"new tests," and I know not what; whereas, on the face of the matter, it was the beloved apostle, not we, who wrote 2 John. And if he introduced no new test when he insisted on uncompromising rigour wherever a false Christ was in question, how charge us with it who are very simply carrying out the word of God given through him? Those who plead for laxity in such a case, would be more consistent if they denied the authority of God's word here altogether.

This, then, was the origin of the Neutrals, or Open Brethren, as some of them prefer to be called. They, more or less, sided with Bethesda, some going farther, others not quite so far, but all on substantially the same principle, if not of receiving the partisans of an anticrist, certainly of palliating those who so received, and making "one lump" with them. Not one meeting ever ventured to reject the most guilty leader in that neutral result. To refuse such an one would be a death blow to their evil line of things.

For it is no question of receiving Christians in Christ's name, graciously dealing with ecclesiastical ignorance. This we have always held (save a few who played an unhappy part in the late disasters) to be thoroughly of God: and I trust we shall ever so continue, believing and acting on it as due to Christ. With O. B. it is a wholly different case from welcoming a godly person, in spite of his sect. For *they* were once with us on common ground of Scripture; they owned the "one body and one Spirit," as gathered to Christ's name. Their origin,

the reason of their existence, was to defend and maintain the reception of men tainted with the worst sin—indifference to the truth of Christ. That they may have liked independency before, that they walk in it and enforce it since, is true enough; but he that puts forward independency of principle, as the plague-spot of the O. B., is blind to their characteristic and most serious evil. And if he goes so far as to reject individuals for independency, he must, to be consistent, abandon all the largeness of heart which marked Brethren from the first, and the principle which their best and wisest leaders cherished to the last—our title of grace to welcome godly saints out of any orthodox denomination, though independency is stamped in various forms on all. No denomination, as such, great or small, does or can stand on the “one body and one Spirit” of Scripture for principle and practice alike. This demands living faith ecclesiastically, and an entire superiority to the world and flesh, which must have independency open or latent but real.

We have ever allowed that in the ranks of Open Brethrenism there might be individuals wholly and honestly ignorant that it is founded as a society on indifference to a true or a false Christ. Where this is certain, one would seek to deal pitifully with them, and no one was freer to receive such with a grave caution than the late J. N. D., as almost all others of weight have done. Timid men, ever prone to sectarian barriers, have, alas! refused even such. But no upright neutral brother would seek, wish, or submit to, such terms; only those who have neither

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faith nor principle, who are ready to break bread at Bethesda, *and* at Park Street, *and* with us too who refuse both systems, if they were allowed. These are the worst of all, and can only corrupt, as they are already corrupted.

It is asked, How do O. B. stand now? The answer is, As they began, or rather worse. Indeed, evil may grow or spread, but does not get better or die. Scripture requires that it be judged, which is its doom, if we are faithful to Christ. Not only did Newtonians get in and were never put out, but some are known, as Mr. J. Beaumont has testified, to play fast and loose with the denial of everlasting punishment, in as respectable a company as they have in England. The conduct of the leaders and meeting was flagrant; but no meeting nor even individual seemed to mind it, beyond a protest, which was put in the fire, and all went on together—in love scalled! But where is the truth? Where is Christ?

Granted that in some places under strong pressure they put away a clique of these offenders; such vigour may be now and then, here and there. But, where it is not so (and nothing is harder than to get necessary care against error), they maintain inter-communion all the same. They are on a free-and-easy ground, which admits of every one's will, and tries nobody's conscience. An "assembly-judgment" there, too, over-rides truth and righteousness, to the deep dishonour of the Lord and His word.

In one of their recent "Appeals," C. E. argues that a true platform contemplates all the saints of God, as we have often said, and still say. But the

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O.B.'s abuse of this godly plea is to accredit, not only Christians guilty of sin, but yet more their society got up by the determination to shelter such from Scriptural judgment. This was not the case with any orthodox sect known to us; and, therefore, O.B. have no title to the same gracious consideration. Others began for good according to their light. O.B. began by palliating evil, or screening evil-doers, in departure from the light they once had. To receive saints in Christ's name was never meant to let in such as dis honour His name; which is as mighty to detect those who treat Him lightly, whatever their pretensions, as to encourage the godly who may be ever so ignorant. An honourable man among O.B. ought not to wish fellowship with us, if he believe in his own policy, and ought to resent the plea of ignorance, which, whenever true, would not be used in vain. And as to "fifty years," what difference do centuries make, if the same old and evil principle abides?

That it does abide is plain from J.R.C.'s "Exclusivism" (Glasgow, 1882); who, though wholly unknown to me, is reported to be as sober and conscientious a representative as could be desired. Here we have the error as lively as ever. 1 Cor. v. 6 is perverted (p. 8) just as of old. He mocks the idea that the whole Corinthian church was leavened, and seems to see absurdity, if so, in calling upon it to purge out the leaven. Thus does he convict himself, and his party (for in this they have always been alike), of guilty opposition to the word of the Lord. It was exactly because they

were as a whole leavened by the little leaven allowed in their midst, that the apostle commanded them to purge out the old leaven that they might be a new lump, "even as ye are unleavened." *This* is their standing in and by Christ; and, because they are thus unleavened before God, they must purge the leaven out; for it leavens, not the one offender only, but the whole lump: The reasoning of Mr. C. is wholly false, but it betrays the unholy principle common to them all. It is a question, not of every individual in the Corinthian church becoming incestuous, &c., which is truly absurd, but of the whole assembly being defiled by the evil they knew and did not judge. Hence the restoration was, not merely through discipline nor only self-judgment of the wicked person, but by a deep work in the assembly also: "in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Cor. vii. 11). The O. B. are thus fundamentally at fault. Their distinctive difference is corruption in principle now, as nearly fifty years ago.

I should not, I confess, turn to an Anglican divine to find spiritual instruction on such a theme, considering how the National Establishment stands condemned in practice by its own Homily for Whitsunday (second part). But it is painfully instructive to see how Dean Alford disproves and rejects the same unholy lack of intelligence as in the Open Brethren's argument for their party. "*Are you not aware that a little leaven imparts a character to the whole lump?*" That this is the meaning, and not 'that a little leaven *will*, if not purged out, leaven the

whole lump,' is manifest from the point in hand viz the inconsistency of their *boasting*: which would not appear by their *danger of corruption hereafter*, but by their *character being actually lost*. One of them was a fornicator of a fearfully depraved kind, tolerated and harboured: by this fact, *the character of the whole was tainted*." (The Greek Test. ii. 507, Fifth Ed.) What Mr. C. assails unwittingly through his false position is *the apostle's "theory"* as well as practice as to defilement. Equally below the Anglican are his unfaithful remarks on 2 John. We do not say that the lady, if she had received him who did not bring the doctrine of Christ, was to be treated "exactly as you would treat" the anti-Christian teacher himself, but that she thereby became a partaker of his evil deeds. So Bethesda and the O. B. have fallen in similar cases.

Their point of departure is so anti-scriptural, that their most recent and cautious apologists cannot but expose their party badge to the withering condemnation of Scripture. Having left God's word, their prudent course (humanly speaking) would be to attempt no self-defence, but to wrap themselves up in silent pride, and trust to love of ease and selfwill to recruit their numbers. Rather may truth work in godly consciences to their deliverance by God's grace.

Scripture is not silent as to their great sin. "Come out," therefore, brother, that you partake not of the sins, and so receive not of God's strokes.

W.K.

